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LADY OF THE LAKE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

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LIFE OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

BY

WILLIAM CHAMBERS, LL.D.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, the fourth child of Walter Scott, Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, was born in that city on the 15th of August, 1771. He came of the old Border family, the Scotts of Harden, an offshoot from the house of Buccleuch. Though he matured into a man of robust health, and of strength nearly herculean, as a child he was feeble and sickly, and very early he was smitten with a lameness which remained with him through life. His childhood was passed for the most part at Sandyknowe, the farm of his grandfather, in Roxburghshire. Here the foundations of his mind were laid; and his early and delighted familiarity with the ballads and legends then floating over all that part of the country, probably did more than any other influence to determine the sphere and modes of his future literary activity. Between the years 1779 and 1783 he attended the High School of Edinburgh, where, despite occasional flashes of talent, he shone considerably more on the playground as a bold, high-spirited and indomitable little fellow, with an odd turn for story-telling, than within he did as a student. In 1783 he went to the University, and for three years he remained there, as it seemed, not greatly to his advantage. Afterwards, in the height of his fame, he was wont to speak with deep regret of his neglect of his early opportunities. But though leaving college but scantily furnished with the knowledge formally taught there, in a desultory way of his own he had been living up stores of valuable, though unassorted information.

From his earliest childhood onward, he was a ravenous and insatiable reader; his memory was of extraordinary range and tenacity, and

of what he either read or observed he seems to have forgot almost nothing. Of Latin he knew little; of Greek, less; but a serviceable, if somewhat inexact knowledge of French, Italian, Spanish and German he had acquired, and he continued to retain. On the whole, for his special purposes, his education was perhaps as available as if he had been the pride of all his preceptors. In 1786 he was articled apprentice to his father, in whose office he worked as a clerk till 1792, in which year he was called to the bar. In his profession he had fair success, and in 1797 he was married to Charlotte Margaret Carpenter, a lady of French birth and parentage. Towards the end of 1799, through the interest of his friends, Lord Melville and the Duke of Buccleuch, he was made sheriff-depute of Selkirkshire, an appointment which brought him £300 a year, with not very much to do for it. Meantime, in a tentative and intermittent way, his leisure had been occupied with literature, which more and more distinctly announced itself as the main business of his life.

His first publication, a translation of Bürger's ballads, *Lenore and The Wild Huntsman*, was issued in 1796. In 1798 appeared his translation of Goethe's drama of *Goetz von Berlichingen*; and in the year following he wrote the fine ballads, *Glenfinlas*, the *Eve of St. John*, and the *Grey Brother*. The year 1802 gave to the world the first two volumes of his *Border Minstrelsy*, which were followed in 1803 by a third and final one. This work, the fruit of those "raids"—as he called them—over the Border counties, in which he had been wont to spend his vacations, was most favourably received by the public, and at once won for him a prominent place among the literary men of the time. In 1804 he issued an edition of the old poem, *Sir Tristrem*, admirably edited and elucidated by valuable dissertations. Meantime, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* had been in progress, and by its publication in 1805, he became at a bound the most popular author of his day.

During the next ten years, besides a mass of miscellaneous work, the most important items of which were elaborate editions of Dryden (1808) and of Swift (1814), including in either case a Life, he gave to the world the poems *Marmion* (1808), *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), *The Vision of Don Roderick* (1811), *Rokeby* (1813), *The Bridal of Triermain*, anonymously published (1813), *The Lord of the Isles*, and *The Field of Waterloo*.

The enthusiasm with which the earlier of these works were received somewhat began to abate as the series proceeded. The charm of novelty was no longer felt; moreover, a distinct deterioration in quality is not in the later poems to be denied; and in the bold outbursts of Byron, with his deeper vein of sentiment and concentrated

energy of passion, a formidable rival had appeared. All this Scott distinctly noted, and after what he felt as the comparative failure of *The Lord of the Isles* in 1815, with the trivial exception of the anonymous piece *Harold the Dauntless* (1817), he published no more poetry. But already in *Waverley*, which appeared without his name in 1814, he had achieved the first of a new and more splendid series of triumphs. *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, and *The Heart of Midlothian* rapidly followed, and the "Great Unknown," as he was called (whom yet every one could very well guess to be no other than Walter Scott), became the idol of the hour. The rest of the famous series, known as the *Waverley Novels*, it would be idle to mention in detail. From this time onward, for some years, he stood on such a pinnacle of fame and brilliant social prosperity as no other British man of letters has ever gone near to reach.

He resided chiefly at Abbotsford, the "romance in stone" he had built himself in the Border country which he loved, and thither, as "Pilgrims of his Genius," summer after summer repaired crowds of the noble and the distinguished, to partake the princely hospitalities of a man whom they found as delightful in the easy intercourse of his home, as before they had found him in his writings. In 1820, to set a seal upon all this distinction, a baronetcy was bestowed upon him as a special mark of the royal favour. But the stately fabric of his fortunes, secure as it seemed, was in secret built upon the shifting sands of commercial speculation, and in the disastrous crisis of the year 1826 a huge ruin smote it. In 1805, his income, as calculated by his biographer, was something nigh £1000 a year, irrespective of what literature might bring him; a handsome competency, shortly by his appointment to a clerkship of the Court of Session to have an increment at first of £800, subsequently of £1300. But what was ample for all prosaic needs, seemed poor to his imagination with its fond and glittering dreams. Already some such vision, as at Abbotsford was afterwards realized, flitted before his mind's eye, and it was the darling ambition of his heart to re-create and leave behind him, in the founding of a family, some image of the olden glories which were the life of his literary inspirations.

In the year above mentioned, lured by the prospect of profit, and without the knowledge of his friends, he joined James Ballantyne, an old schoolfellow, in the establishment of a large printing business in Edinburgh. To this, a few years afterwards, a publishing business was added, under the nominal conduct of John Ballantyne, a brother of James; Scott, in the new adventure, becoming, as before, a partner. Gradually the affairs of the two firms became complicated with those of the great house of Constable & Co., in the sudden collapse of which Scott found himself

one forenoon a bankrupt, with personal liabilities to the extent of something like £150,000;

‘In the reproof of chance
Lies the true proof of men’—

and now, in this challenge of adverse fate, his manhood and proud integrity were most nobly approved. With his creditors, composition would have been easy; but this usual course he disdained. “God granting him time and health,” he said, “he would owe no man a penny.” And somewhat declined as he now was from the first vigour and elasticity of his strength, he set himself by the labour of his pen to liquidate this enormous debt.

Breaking up his establishment at Abbotsford, where the wife whom he loved lay dying, he hired a lodging in Edinburgh, and there for some years, with stern and unfaltering resolution, he toiled at his prodigious task. The stream of novels flowed as formerly: a *History of Napoleon*, in eight volumes, was undertaken and completed, with much other miscellaneous work; and within the space of two years, he had realized for his creditors the amazing sum of nearly £40,000. A new and annotated edition of the novels was issued with immense success, and there seemed every prospect that, within a reasonable period, he might again front the world, as he had pledged himself to do, not owing to any man a penny. In this hope he toiled on; but the limits of endurance had been reached, and the springs of the outworn brain broke in that stress of cruel and long-continued effort. In 1830 he was smitten down with paralysis, from which he never thoroughly rallied. It was hoped that the climate of Italy might benefit him; and by the government of the day a frigate was placed at his disposal in which to proceed thither. But in Italy he pined for the home to which he returned only to die.

At Abbotsford, on the 21st September, 1832, he died, with his children round him and the murmur of the Tweed in his ears. On the 26th, he was buried beside his wife in the old Abbey of Dryburgh.

THE
LADY OF THE LAKE:

A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

TO THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES, MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,
ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

The Chase.

HARP of the North! that mouldering
long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades
Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy num-
bers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee
cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every
string,—
O minstrel Harp, still must thine
accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains
murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds
their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a
maid to weep?
Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal
crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory
won,

Aroused the fearful, or subdued the
proud.
At each according pause, was heard
aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime
and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs atten-
tion bow'd;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed,
and Beauty's matchless eye.
O wake once more! how rude soe'er
the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze
to stray;
O wake once more! though scarce
my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine
earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon
to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler
strain,
Yet if one heart throbs higher at its
sway,
The wizard note has not been
touch'd in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchant-
ress, wake again!

* Story.



I.

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
 Where danced the moon on Monan's
 rill,
 And deep his midnight lair had
 made
 In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
 But, when the sun his beacon red
 Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,*
 The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's
 heavy bay
 Resounded up the rocky way,
 And faint, from farther distance
 borne,
 Were heard the clanging hoof and
 horn.

II.

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
 "To arms! the foemen storm the
 wall,"
 The antler'd monarch of the waste
 Sprung from his heathery couch in
 haste.
 But, ere his fleet career he took,
 The dew-drops from his flanks he
 shook;
 Like crested leader proud and high,
 Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky;
 A moment gazed adown the dale,
 A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
 A moment listen'd to the cry,
 That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh;
 Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
 With one brave bound the copse he
 clear'd,
 And, stretching forward free and far,
 Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yell'd on the view the opening pack;
 Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them
 back;
 To many a mingled sound at once
 The awaken'd mountain gave re-
 sponse.
 A hundred dogs bay'd deep and
 strong,
 Clatter'd a hundred steeds along,
 Their peal the merry horns rung out,

* One of the Grampian chain of mountains
 at the head of the Valley of the Garry.

A hundred voices join'd the shout;
 With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
 No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
 Far from the tumult fled the roe,
 Close in her covert cower'd the doe,
 The falcon, from her cairn on high,
 Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
 Till far beyond her piercing ken
 The hurricane had swept the glen.
 Faint and more faint, its failing din
 Return'd from cavern, cliff, and linn,
 And silence settled, wide and still,
 On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
 Disturb'd the heights of Uam-Var,
 And roused the cavern, where 'tis told,
 A giant made his den of old;
 For ere that steep ascent was won,
 High in his pathway hung the sun,
 And many a gallant, stay'd perforce,
 Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
 And of the trackers of the deer,
 Scarce half the lessening pack was
 near;
 So shrewdly on the mountain side
 Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now,
 Upon the mountain's southern brow,
 Where broad extended, far beneath,
 The varied realms of fair Menteith.
 With anxious eye he wander'd o'er
 Mountain and meadow, moss and
 moor,
 And ponder'd refuge from his toil,
 By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
 But nearer was the copsewood grey,
 That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue
 On the bold cliffs of Benvenue,
 Fresh vigour with the hope return'd,
 With flying foot the heath he spurn'd,
 Held westward with unwearied race,
 And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave
 o'er,
 As swept the hunt through Cambus-
 more;

What reins were tighten'd in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;*
Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shun'd to stem the flooded
Teith, †—

For twice that day, from shore to
shore,

The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach'd the lake of Venachar;
And when the Brigg ‡ of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and
steel;

For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Emboss'd with foam, and dark with
soil,

While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strain'd full in
view.

Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's
breed,

Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and
speed,

Fast on his flying traces came
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his
haunch,

Vindictive toil'd the bloodhounds
staunch;

Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.

Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they
take.

VIII.

The Hunter mark'd that mountain
high,

The lone lake's western boundary,
And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barr'd the
way;

* Benledi is a high mountain on the north-west of Callender. Its name signifies the mountain of God.

† A river which gives its name to the territory of Menteth.

‡ Brigg, a bridge.

Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whinyard
drew;—

But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
And turn'd him from the opposing
rock;

Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.

There, while close couch'd, the thicket
shed

Cold dews and wild-flowers on his
head,

He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain.
Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanish'd game;

But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.

The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no
more;

Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.

“I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,

That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!

Woe worth the chase, woe worth the
day,

That costs thy life, my gallant grey!”

X.

Then through the dell his horn re-
sounds,

From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limp'd, with slow and crippled

pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;

Closeto their master's side they press
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat

Prolong'd the swelling bugle-note,
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were
cast,

Till echo seem'd an answering blast;
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it show'd,

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower* which builders
vain

Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles
bare,

Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver'd brows dis-
play'd,

Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops
sheen,

The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand
dyes,

Waved in the west-wind's summer
sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's
child,

Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by
side,

Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every
stain

The weather-beaten crags retain.
With bows that quaked at every
breath,

Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent
flung,

Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on
high,

His bows athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks
glanced,

Where glist'ning streamers waded
and danced,

The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might
seem

The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of
brim,

As served the wild duck's brood to
swim,

Lost for a space, through thickets
veering,

But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their
face

Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweeps its channels
made.

The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still

* The Tower of Babel.—Genesis xi. 1—9.

Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's
ken,

Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A fair projecting precipice.

The broom's tough roots his ladder
made,

The hazel saplings lent their aid;

And thus an airy point he won,

Where, gleaming with the setting
sun,

One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,

In all her length far winding lay,

With promontory, creek, and bay,

And islands that, empurpled bright,

Floated amid the livelier light,

And mountains, that like giants
stand,

To sentinel enchanted land.

High on the south, huge Benvenue

Down on the lake in masses threw

Crags, knolls and mounds, confused-
ly hurl'd,

The fragments of an earlier world;

A wildering forest feather'd o'er

His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,

While on the north, through middle
air,

Ben-an heaved high his forehead
bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.

And, "What a scene were here," he
cried,

"For princely pomp, or churchman's
pride!

On this bold brow, a lordly tower;

In that soft vale, a lady's bower;

On yonder meadow, far away,

The turrets of a cloister grey;

How blithely might the bugle-horn

Chide, on the lake, the lingering
morn!

How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute

Chime, when the groves were still
and mute!

And, when the midnight moon should
lave

Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come

The holy matins' distant hum,

While the deep peal's commanding
tone

Should wake, in yonder islet lone,

A sainted hermit from his cell,

To drop a bead with every knell—

And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,

Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!

But now,—beshrew yon nimble
deer,—

Like that same hermit's, thin and
spare,

The copse must give my evening
fare;

Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.

Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place;—

A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment:

But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss'd than found;

To meet with Highland plunderers
here,

Were worse than loss of steed or
deer.—

I am alone;—my bugle strain

May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worse that may betide,

Ere now this falchion has been
tried."

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth-starting at the sound,

From underneath an aged oak,

That slanted from the islet rock,

A damsel guider of its way,

A little skiff shot to the bay,

That round the promontory steep

Led its deep line in graceful sweep,

Eddying in almost viewless wave,

The weeping willow-twig to lave,

And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touch'd this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.

With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem'd to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had train'd her pace,—

A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew;
E'en the slight hare-bell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX.

A Chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid;
Her satin snood,* her silken plaid,

* Snood, the fillet worn round the hair of maidens.

Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.

And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combin'd

Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,

Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast;

Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,
Or tale of injury call'd forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unreveal'd,
With maiden pride the maid conceal'd,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
O need tell that passion's name!

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne;—
"Father!" she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
A while she paused, no answer came,—
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the name

Less resolutely utter'd fell,
The echoes could not catch the swell.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar,
Push'd her light shallop from the shore,

And when a space was gain'd between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;
(So forth the startled swan would swing,

So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)
Then safe, though flutter'd and
amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly press'd its signet sage
Yet had not quench'd the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to
fire,

Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb array'd,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a Baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trode the
shore.

Slighting the petty need he show'd,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seem'd that tone, and gesture
bland,

Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull'd for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bred,
And our broad nets have swept the
mere,
To furnish forth your evening
cheer."—

"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err'd," he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,

The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land!"—

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approach'd the
side,—

"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's
shore;

But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,—
A gray-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision'd future bent.

He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;

Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,

That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,

That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.

He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree;

But light I held his prophecy,
And deem'd it was my father's horn,

Whose echoes o'er the lake were
borne."

XXIV.

The stranger smiled:—"Since to
your home

A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doom'd, doubtless, for achievement
bold,

I'll lightly front each high emprise,
For one kind glance of those bright
eyes.

Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."

The maid, with smile suppress'd and
sly,

The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom sure, if e'er before,

His noble hand had grasp'd an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes

he drew,

And o'er the lake the shallop flew ;
With heads erect, and whimpering
cry,

The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar
break

The dark'ning mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The stranger view'd the shore around,
'Twas all so close with copsewood
bound,

Nor track nor pathway might de-
clare

That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden show'd
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled
screen,

And open'd on a narrow green,
Where weeping Lirch and willow
round

With their long fibres swept the
ground.

Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device ;
Of such materials, as around
The workman's hand had readiest
found.

Lopp'd off their boughs, their hoar
trunks bared,

And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined
height,

The sturdy oak and ash unite ;
While moss and clay and leaves com-
bined

To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, over-head,
Their slender length for rafters
spread,

And wither'd heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.

Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir, with bark unshorn,

Where Ellen's hand had taught to
twine

The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favour'd flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-
bower,

And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching
air.

An instant in this porch she staid,
And gaily to the stranger said,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

XXVII.

"My hope, my heaven, my trust
must be,

My gentle guide, in following thee."
He cross'd the threshold—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rush'd,
But soon for vain alarm he blush'd,
When on the floor he saw display'd,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropp'd from the sheath, that care-
less flung

Upon a stag's huge antlers swung ;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase :
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows
store,

With the tusk'd trophies of the boar.
Hero grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled
hide

The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns ;
Pennons and flags defaced and
stain'd,

That blackening streaks of blood re-
tain'd.

And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and
white,

With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering stranger round him
gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised:—

Few were the arms whose sinewy
strength

Sufficed to stretch it forth at length,
And as the brand he poised and
sway'd,

"I never knew but one," he said,
"Whose stalwart arm might brook to
wield

A blade like this in battle-field.
She sigh'd, then smiled and took the
word:

"You see the guardian champion's
sword:

As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand;
My sire's tall form might grace the
part

Of Ferragus or Ascabart;
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred
knew,

Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unask'd his birth and
name.

Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger
names,

"The Knight of Snowdown, James
Fitz-James;

Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to
age,

By their good swords had held with
toil;

His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning, with Lord Moray's
train,

He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the
deer,
Lost his good steed, and wander'd
here."

XXX.

Fain would the knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well show'd the elder lady's mien,
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks dis-
play'd

The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Show'd she was come of gentle race.
'Twere strange, in ruder rank to find,
Such looks, such manners, and such
mind.

Each hint the Knight of Snowdown
gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence
grave;

Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turn'd all inquiry light away:—
"Weird women we! by dale and
down

We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we
cast;

While viewless minstrels touch the
string,
'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we
sing."

She sung, and still a harp unseen
Fill'd up the symphony between.

XXXI.

Song.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not
breaking;

Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strew-
ing,

Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more:

Sleep the sleep that knows not
breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

“No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-steed
champing,

Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramp-
ing,

Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the day-break from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near.
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and
champing,
Shouting clans, or squadrons stamp-
ing.”

XXXII.

She paused—then, blushing, led the
L_y

To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

Song continued.

“Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail
ye,

Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;

Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé.”

XXXIII.

The hall was clear'd—the stranger's
bed

Was there of mountain heather
spread,

Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dream'd their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed

Its moorland fragrance round his
head;

Not Ellen's spell had lull'd to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.

In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour's lost.
Then,—from my couch may heavenly
might

Chase that worst phantom of the
night!—

Again return'd the scenes of youth,
Of confident undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long
estranged.

They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view.
O were his senses false or true!
Dream'd he of death, or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seen'd to walk, and speak of love;
She listen'd with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were
high.

He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and
gone,

Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darken'd cheek and threatening
eyes,

The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke, and panting with affright,
Recall'd the vision of the night.

The hearth's decaying brands were
red,

And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
'Mid those the stranger fixed his eye,

Where that huge falchion hung on high,
 And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
 Rush'd, causing countless thoughts along,
 Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
 He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild-rose, eglantine, and broom,
 Wasted around their rich perfume:
 The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
 The aspens slept beneath the calm;
 The silverlight, with quivering glance,
 Play'd on the water's still expanse, —
 Wild were the heart whose passions' sway

Could rage beneath the sober ray!
 He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
 While thus he communed with his breast:—

“Why is it, at each turn I trace
 Some memory of that exiled race!
 Can I not mountain-maiden spy,
 But she must bear the Douglas eye?
 Can I not view a Highland brand,
 But it must match the Douglas hand?
 Can I not frame a fever'd dream,
 But still the Douglas is the theme?
 I'll dream no more—by manly mind
 Not even in sleep is will resign'd.
 My midnight orisons said o'er,
 I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.”
 His midnight orisons he told,
 A prayer with every bead of gold,
 Consign'd to heaven his cares and woes,

And sunk in undisturb'd repose;
 Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
 And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND.

The Island.

I.

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
 'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
 All Nature's children feel the matin spring

Of life reviving, with reviving day;
 And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
 Wafting the stranger on his way again,
 Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey,
 And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
 Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-hair'd Allan-Bane!

II.

Song.

“Not faster yonder rowers' might
 Flings from their oars the spray,
 Not faster yonder rippling bright,
 That tracks the sloop's course in light,
 Melts in the lake away,
 Than men from memory erase
 The benefits of former days;
 Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
 Nor think again of the lonely isle.

“High place to thee in royal court,
 High place in battle line,
 Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport,
 Where beauty sees the brave resort,
 The honour'd need be thine!
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
 And lost in love and friendship's smile
 Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

Song continued.

“But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
 Pine for his Highland home;
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show
 The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
 Remember then thy hap ere while,
 A stranger in the lonely isle.
 “Or if on life's uncertain main
 Mishap shall mar thy sail;
 If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,

Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
 Beneath the fickle gale;
 Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
 On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
 But come where kindred worth shall smile,
 To greet thee in the lonely isle."

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
 Theshallop reach'd the mainland side,
 And ere his onward way he took,
 The stranger cast a lingering look,
 Where easily his eye might reach
 The Harper on the islet beach,
 Reclined against a blighted tree,
 As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
 To minstrel meditation given,
 His reverend brow was raised to

heaven,

As from the rising sun to claim
 A sparkle of inspiring flame.
 His hand, reclined upon the wire,
 Seem'd watching the awakening fire;
 So still he sate, as those who wait
 Till judgment speak the doom of fate;

So still, as if no breeze might dare
 To lift one lock of hoary hair;
 So still, as life itself were fled,
 In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
 Beside him Eilen sate and smiled.—
 Smiled she to see the stately drake
 Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
 While her vex'd spaniel from the beach,
 Bay'd at the prize beyond his reach?
 Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,

Why deepen'd on her cheek the rose?—
 Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
 Perchance the maiden smiled to see
 Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
 And stop and turn to wave anew;
 And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
 Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
 And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loiter'd on the spot,
 It seem'd as Ellen mark'd him not;
 But when he turn'd him to the glade,
 One courteous parting sign she made;
 And after, oft the knight would say,
 That not when prize of festal day
 Was dealt him by the brightest fair,
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell,
 As at that simple mute farewell.

Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
 He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
 Watch'd him wind slowly round the hill;

But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid—
 "Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish
 maid!"

'Twas thus upbraiding conscience
 said,—
 "Not so had Malcolm idly hung
 On the smooth phrase of southern
 tongue;

Not so had Malcolm strain'd his eye,
 Another step than thine to spy.
 Wake, Allan-Bane," aloud she cried,
 To the old Minstrel by her side,—

"Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a noble name;
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme!"
 Scarce from her lip the word had
 rush'd,

When deep the conscious maiden
 blush'd;

For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the
 flower.

VII.

The Minstrel waked his harp—three
 times

Arose the well-known martial chimes,
 And thrice their high heroic pride
 In melancholy murmurs died.

"Vainly thou bid'st, O noble maid,"
 Clasping his wither'd hands, he said,
 "Vainly thou bid'st me wake the
 strain,

Though all unwont to bid in vain.

Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has
spann'd!

I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe,
And the proud march, which victors
tread,

Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful father said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan
sway'd,

Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sigh'd
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I
strove

To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wail'd loud through Bothwell's ban-
ner'd hall,

Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heav-
en.—

Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe,
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shiver'd shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!"

IX.

Soothing she answer'd him, "Assuage,
Mine honour'd friend, the fears of age;
All melodies to thee are known,
That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel,
then,

At times, unbidden notes should rise,
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they rush along,

The war-march with the funeral
song?—

Small ground is now for boding fear;
Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.

My sire, in native virtue great,
Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
Not then to fortune more resign'd,
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage storms may
reave,

The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me,"—she stopp'd, and, looking
round,

Pluck'd a blue hare-bell from the
ground,—

"For me, whose memory scarce con-
veys

An image of more splendid days,
This little flower, that loves the lea,
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as
rose

'That in the king's own garden grows;
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreath'd in her dark locks, and
smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning
sway,

Wiled the old harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw,
When angels stoop to soothe their
woe,

He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrill'd to a tear, then thus replied:
"Loveliest and best! thou little
know'st

The rank, the honours, thou hast lost!
O might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birth-right
place,

To see my favourite's step advance,
The lightest in the courtly dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"*—

* The cognizance of the Douglas family.

XI.

“Fair dreams are these,” the maiden
cried,
(Light was her accent, yet she sigh’d;)
“Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footsteps spring more
gay
In courtly dance than blithe strath-
spey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel’s lay as thine.
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,—
Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt
say,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine’s
pride,
The terror of Loch Lomond’s side,
Would, at my suit, thou know’st, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day.”—

XII.

The ancient bard his glee repress’d:
“Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western
wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e’er, and
smiled!
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlaw’d, hath his
hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the
day,
That I such hated truth should say—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
)
Disown’d by every noble peer,
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms ex-
pand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be
brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,

Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou’rt so
dear,
That thou mightst guide with silken
thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread;
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion’s main.”—

XIII.

“Minstrel,” the maid replied, and
high
Her father’s soul glanced from her
eye,
“My debts to Roderick’s house I
know:
All that a mother could bestow,
To Lady Margaret’s care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrow’d o’er her sister’s child;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland’s king who shrouds my
sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnan’s cell;
Rather through realms beyond the
sea,
Seeking the world’s cold charity,
Where ne’er was spoke a Scottish
word,
And ne’er the name of Douglas
heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

“Thou shakest, good friend, thy
tresses grey,—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn’s thundering
wave;
And generous—save vindictive mood,
Or jealous transport, chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel

More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they
wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet
stood,

A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought,
I honour, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red,
From peasants slaughter'd in their
shed?

No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child,—and children
know,

Instinctive taught, the friend and
foe,—

I shudder'd at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
A maiden gown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air:
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were
best,—

What think'st thou of our stranger
guest?"—

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the
while
That brought such wanderer to our
isle!

Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For line-man forged by fairy lore,
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur's
bows,

Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy hath harbour'd here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deem'd of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick say?

—Nay, wave not thy disdainful head,
Bethink thee of the discord dread
That kindled, when at Beltane game
Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm
Græme;

Still, though thy sire the peace re-
new'd,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the
feud;

Beware!—But hark, what sounds are
these?

My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
Still is the canna's* hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.

Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four mann'd and masted barges
grew,

And, bearing downwards from Glen-
gyle,

Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchol they pass'd,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd
Pine.

Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spear, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and
wave:

Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters† down, and
sweep

The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland
strain.

* Cotton grass.

† The pipe of the bagpipe.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
 And louder rung the pibroch proud.
 At first the sound, by distance tame,
 Mellow'd along the waters came,
 And, lingering long by cape and bay,
 Wail'd every harsher note away;
 Then bursting bolder on the ear,
 The clan's shrill Gathering they could
 hear;
 Those thrilling sounds, that call the
 night
 Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
 Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
 The mustering hundreds shake the
 glen,
 And, hurrying at the signal dread,
 The batter'd earth returns their
 tread.
 Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
 Express'd their merry marching on,
 Ere peal of closing battle rose,
 With mingled outcry, shrieks, and
 blows;
 And mimic din of stroke and ward,
 As broad sword upon target jarr'd;
 And groaning pause, ere yet again,
 Condensed, the battle yell'd amain;
 The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
 Retreat borne headlong into rout,
 And bursts of triumph, to declare
 Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were
 there.
 Nor ended thus the strain; but slow,
 Sunk in a moan prolong'd and low,
 And changed the conquering clarion
 swell,
 For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased; but lake and
 hill
 Were busy with their echoes still;
 And, when they slept, a vocal strain
 Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
 While loud a hundred clansmen
 raise
 Their voices in their Chieftain's
 praise.
 Each boatman, bending to his oar,
 With measured sweep the burden
 bore,

In such will cadence, as the breeze
 Makes through December's leafless
 trees.

The chorus first could Allan know,
 "Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
 And near, and nearer as they row'd,
 Distinct the martial ditty flow'd.

XIX.

Boat Song.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph ad-
 vances!
 Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-
 green Pine!
 Long may the tree, in his banner
 that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of
 our line!

Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to burgeon, and broadly to
 grow,

While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back agen,
 "Roderick Vich Alpine dhu, ho!
 ieroe!"

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by
 the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to
 fade;

When the whirlwind has stripp'd
 every leaf on the mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult
 in her shade.

Hoar'd in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it
 blow;

Montoith and Dreadalbane,
 then,

Echo his praise agen,
 "Roderick Vich Alpine dhu, ho!
 ieroe!"

XX.

Proudly our pibroch* has thrill'd in
 Glen I ruin,
 And Bannochar's groans to our slo-
 gan† replied;

* Bagpipe air belonging to a clan.
 † Slogan, a war-cry.

Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are
smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie
dead on her side.

Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and
with woe;
Lenox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear agen,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho!
ieroe!"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of
the Highlands!

Stretch to your oars, for the ever-
green Pine!

O! that the rose-bud that graces yon
islands,

Were wreathed in a garland around
him to twine!

O that some seedling gem,

Worthy such noble stem,

Honour'd and bless'd in their
shadow might grow!

Loud should Clan-Alpine then

Ring from the deepest glen,

"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho!
ieroe!"

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
Had Lady Margaretsought the strand,

Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,

And high their snowy arms they threw,

As echoing back with shrill acclaim,

And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;

While, prompt to please, with moth-

er's art,

The darling passion of his heart,

The Dame call'd Ellen to the strand,

To greet her kinsman ere he land:

"Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,

And shun to wreath a victor's brow?"—

Reluctantly and slow, the maid

The unwelcome summoning obey'd,

And, when a distant bugle rung,

In the mid-path aside she sprung:—

"List, Allan-Bane! From mainland

cast,

I hear my father's signal blast.

Be ours," she cried, "the skiff to
guide,

And waft him from the mountain
side."

Then, like a sunbeam, swift and
bright,

She darted to her shallop light,

And, eagerly while Roderick scann'd,

For her dear form, his mother's band,

The islet far behind her lay,

And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than
heaven:

And if there be a human tear

From passion's dross refined and
clear,

A tear so limpid and so meek,

It would not stain an angel's cheek,

'Tis that which pious fathers shed

Upon a duteous daughter's head!

And as the Douglas to his breast

His darling Ellen closely press'd,

Such holy drops her tresses steep'd,

Though'twas a hero's eye that weep'd,

Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue

Her filial welcomes crowded hung,

Mark'd she, that fear (affection's proof)

Still held a graceful youth aloof;

No! not till Douglas named his name,

Although the youth was Malcolm
Graeme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look, the while,
Mark'd Roderick landing on the
isle;

Eis master piteously he eyed,

Then gazed upon the chieftain's
pride.

Then dash'd, with hasty hand, away
From his dimm'd eye the gathering
spray;

And Douglas, as his hand he laid

On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said,

"Canst thou, young friend, no mean-
ing spy

In my poor follower's glistening eye?

I'll tell thee:—he recalls the day,

When in my praise he led the lay

O'er the arch'd gate of Bothwell
proud,

While many a minstrel answer'd
 loud,
 When Percy's Norman pennon, won
 In bloody field, before me shone,
 And twice ten knights, the least a
 name
 As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
 Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
 Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
 Was I of all that marshall'd crowd,
 Though the waned crescent own'd
 my might,
 And in my train troop'd lord and
 knight,
 Though Blantyre hymn'd her holiest
 lays,
 And Bothwell's bards flung back my
 praise,
 As when this old man's silent tear,
 And this poor maid's affection dear,
 A welcome give more kind and true,
 Than aught my better fortunes knew.
 Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,
 O! it out-beggars all I lost!"

XXIV.

Delightful praise! Like summer rose,
 That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
 The bashful maiden's cheek appear'd,
 For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm
 heard.
 The flush of shame-faced joy to
 hide,
 The hounds, the hawk, her cares
 divide;
 The loved caresses of the maid
 The dogs with crouch and whimper
 paid;
 And, at her whistle, on her hand
 The falcon took her favourite stand,
 Closed his dark wing, relax'd his eye,
 Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
 And, trust, while in such guise she
 stood,
 Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
 That if a father's partial thought
 O'erweigh'd her worth and beauty
 aught,
 Well might the lover's judgment fail
 To balance with a juster scale;
 For with each secret glance he stole,
 The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
 But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
 The belted plaid and tartan hose
 Did ne'er more graceful limbs dis-
 close;
 His flaxen hair of sunny hue,
 Curl'd closely round his bonnet blue.
 Train'd to the chase, his eagle eye
 The ptarmigan in snow could spy:
 Each pass, by mountain, lake, and
 heath,
 He knew, through Lennox and Mer-
 teith;
 Vain was the bound of dark-brown
 doe,
 When Malcolm bent his sounding
 bow,
 And scarce that doe, though wing'd
 with fear,
 Outstripp'd in speed the mountain-
 eer:
 Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
 And not a sob his toil confess.
 His form accorded with a mind
 Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
 A blither heart, till Ellen came,
 Did never love nor sorrow tame;
 It danced as lightsome in his breast,
 As play'd the feather on his crest.
 Yet friends, who nearest knew the
 youth,
 His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
 And bards, who saw his features bold,
 When kindled by the tales of old,
 Said, were that youth to manhood
 grown,
 Not long should Roderick Dhu's
 renown
 Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
 But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery
 way,
 And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say,
 "Why urge thy chase so far astray?
 And why so late return'd? And
 why—"
 The rest was in her speaking eye.
 "My child, the chase I follow far,
 'Tis mimicry of noble war;

And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I stray'd,
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor stray'd I safe; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scour'd the
ground.

This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risk'd life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood,
Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome
make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick
glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Redden'd at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Fail'd aught in hospitality.

In talk and sport they wiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared,
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seem'd toiling in his
head;

Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen, too; then cast around
His eyes, then fix'd them on the
ground,

As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
Then raised his haughty brow, and
said:—

XXVIII.

"Short be my speech;—nor time af-
fords.

Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's
claim;

Mine honour'd mother;—Ellen—why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?—

And Græme; in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy cam-
mand,

And leading in thy native land,—
Listall!—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk
who came

To share their monarch's sylvan
game,

Themselves in bloody toils were
snared;

And when the banquet they prepared,
An l wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling
hung.

Loud cries their blood from Meggat's
mead,

From Yarrow braes, and banks of
Tweed,

Where the lone streams of Ettrick
glide,

And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did
ride,

Are now one sheep-walk, waste and
wide.

This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes, his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.

What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge
ye

By fate of Border chivalry.

Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know;
Your counsel in the streight I show."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turn'd their ghastly look, each
one,

This to her sire—that to her son.
The hasty colour went and came

In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;
But from his glance it well appear'd,

'Twas but for Ellen that he fear'd;
While, sorrowful, but undismay'd,

The Douglas thus his counsel said:—

“Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,

It may but thunder and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For wilt thou know'st, at this grey head

The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,

Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek, apart,
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be pass'd and o'er.”—

XXX.

“No, by mine honour,” Roderick said,

“So help me, heaven, and my good blade!

No, never! Clashed be yon Pine,
My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: Grant me this mail

To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,

Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,

Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,

The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;

And, when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames,
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!

—Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;

I meant not all my heart might say.—

Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foild king, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen.”

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean-tide's incessant roar,
Dream'd calmly out their dangerous dream,

Till waken'd by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears fore-show?—

Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawn'd around,
By crossing terrors wildly toss'd,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy

In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas mark'd the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;

For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rash'd the throbbing blood,

Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,

Left its domain as wan as clay.
“Roderick, enough! enough!” he cried,

"My daughter cannot be thy bride;
 Not that the blush to wooer dears,
 Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
 It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
 Nor hazard aught for our relief.
 Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
 Will level a rebellious spear.
 'Twas I that taught his youthful
 hand

To rein a steed and wield a brand;
 I see him yet, the princely boy!
 Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
 I love him still, despite my wrongs,
 By hasty wrath, and slanderous
 tongues.

O seek the grace you well may find,
 Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain
 strode;

The waving of his tartans broad,
 And darken'd brow, where wounded
 pride

With ire and disappointment vied,
 Seem'd, by the torch's gloomy light,
 Like the ill Demon of the night.

Stooping his pinion's shadowy sway
 Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:

But, unrequited Love! thy dart
 Plunged deepest its venom'd
 smart,

And Roderick, with thine anguish
 stung,

At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
 While eyes, that mock'd at tears be-
 fore,

With bitter drops were running o'er.
 The death-pangs of long-cherish'd
 hope

Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
 But, struggling with his spirit proud,
 Convulsive heaved its chequer'd
 shroud,

While every sob—so mute were all—
 Was heard distinctly through the
 hall.

The son's despair, the mother's look,
 Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
 She rose, and to her side there
 came,

To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas
 broke—

As flashes flame through sable smoke,
 Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and
 low,

To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
 So the deep anguish of despair
 Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.

With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:

"Back, beardless boy!" he sternly
 said,

"Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at
 naught

The lesson I so lately taught?

This roof, the Douglas, and that
 maid,

Thank thou for punishment delay'd."

Eager as greyhound on his game,
 Fiercely with Roderick grappled
 Græme.

"Perish my name, if aught afford
 Its Chieftain safety save his sword!"

Thus as they strove, their desperate
 hand

Griped to the dagger or the brand,
 And death had been—but Douglas
 rose,

And thrust between the struggling
 foe:

His giant strength:—"Chieftains,
 forego!

I hold the first who strikes, my
 foe.—

Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!

What! is the Douglas fall'n so far,

His daughter's hand is doom'd the
 spoil

Of such dishonourable broil!"

Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
 As struck with shame, their desper-
 ate grasp,

And each upon his rival glared,
 With foot advanced, and blade half
 bared.

XXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
 Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
 And Malcolm heard his Ellen's
 scream,

As falter'd through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his
sword,
And veil'd his wrath in scornful
word.

“Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight
air!

Then mayest thou to James Stuart
tell,

Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey, with his freeborn clan,
The pageant pomp of earthly man.

More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes
show.—

Malise, what ho!”—his henchman
came;*

“Give our safe-conduct to the
Græme.”

Young Malcolm answer'd, calm and
bold,

“Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
The spot, an angel deigned to grace,
Is bless'd, though robbers haunt the
place.

Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.

As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
Nought here of parting will I say.

Earth does not hold a lonesome glen,
So secret, but we meet agen.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour.”
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan follow'd to the strand,
(Such was the Douglas's command,)
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had
sworn,

The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down, and
moor.

* A henchman was the confidential attendant or gilly of a chief. His standing behind his lord at festivals originated the name of haunch-man or henchman.

Much were the peril to the Græme,
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broad-
sword roll'd,

His ample plaid in tighten'd fold,
And stripp'd his limbs to such array,
As best might suit the watery way,—

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt: “Farewell to
thee,

Pattern of old fidelity!”

The Minstrel's hand he kindly
press'd,—

“O! could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and
blade.

Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honour'd Douglas
dwell,

Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swoll'n robber
dare—

I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him
nought,

Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side.”
Then plunged he in the flashing
tide.

Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steer'd him from the
shore;

And Allan strain'd his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
Darkening across each puny wave
To which the moon her silver gave,
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.

The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore with-
drew.

CANTO THIRD.

The Gathering.

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The
 race of yore,
 Who danced our infancy upon their
 knee,
 And told our marvelling boyhood le-
 gends store,
 Of their strange ventures happ'd
 by land or sea,
 How are they blotted from the things
 that be!

How few, all weak and wither'd of
 their force,
 Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
 Like stranded wrecks, the tide re-
 turning hoarse,
 To sweep them from our sight! Time
 rolls his ceaseless course.

Yet live there still who can remember
 well,

How, when a mountain chief his
 bugle blew,
 Both field and forest, dingle, cliff,
 and dell,

And solitary heath, the signal knew;
 And fast the faithful clan around him
 drew,

What time the warning note was
 keenly wound,
 What time aloft their kindred banner
 flew,

While clamorous war-pipes yell'd
 the gathering sound,
 And while the Fiery Cross glanced
 like a meteor round.

II.

The Summer dawn's reflected hue
 To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
 Mildly and soft the western breeze
 Just kiss'd the lake, just stirr'd the
 trees,

And the pleas'd lake, like maiden coy,
 Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
 The mountain-shadows on her breast
 Were neither broken nor at rest;
 In bright uncertainty they lie,
 Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
 The water-lily to the light

Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
 The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
 Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her
 fawn;

The grey mist left the mountain side,
 The torrent show'd its glistening
 pride;

Invisible in flecked sky,
 The lark sent down her revelry;
 The blackbird and the speckled thrush
 Good-morrow gave from brake and
 bush;

In answer coo'd the cushat dove
 Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
 Assuaged the storm in Roderick's
 breast.

With sheathed broadsword in his
 hand,

Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
 And eyed the rising sun, and laid
 His hand on his impatient blade.
 Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
 Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
 With deep and deathful meaning
 fraught;

For such Antiquity had taught
 Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
 The Cross of Fire should take its road.
 The shrinking band stood oft aghast
 At the impatient glance he cast;—
 Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
 As from the cliffs of Benvenue,
 She spread her dark sails on the wind,
 And, high in middle heaven, reclined,
 With her broad shadow on the lake,
 Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of wither'd boughs was piled,
 Of juniper and rowan wild,
 Mingled with shivers from the oak,
 Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
 Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
 Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
 His grised beard and matted hair
 Obscured a visage of despair;
 His naked arms and legs, seam'd o'er,
 The scars of frantic penance bore.
 That monk, of savage form and face,

The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.

Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose harden'd heart and eye might
brook

On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
Mix'd in the charms he mutter'd o'er.
The hallow'd creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse;

No peasant sought that Hermit's pray-
er,

His cave the pilgrim shunn'd with
care,

The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase call'd off his hound,
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He pray'd, and sign'd the cross be-
tween,

While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were
told:

His mother watch'd a midnight fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scatter'd lay the bones of men,
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleach'd by drifting wind and
rain.

It might have tamed a warrior's
heart,

To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fetter'd there the
hand,

Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That buckler'd heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blind-worm left his
slime,

On the fleet limbs that mock'd at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet, flush'd
and full,

For heath-bell with her purple bloom,
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen, the maid

Sate, shrouded in her mantle's shade:
—She said, no shepherd sought her
side,

No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear;
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,
Norsought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or blessed rite,
But lock'd her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfess'd.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless
tongue

On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight
pale,

To wood and stream his hap to wail,
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate;
In vain, the learning of the age
Unclasp'd the sable letter'd page;
Even in its treasures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.

Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride;
Till with fired brain and nerves o'er-
strung,

And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre's child.
Where with black cliffs the torrents
toil,

He watch'd the wheeling eddies boil,
Till, from their foam, his dazzled
eyes

Beheld the River Demon rise;
 The mountain mist took form and
 limb,
 Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;
 The midnight wind came wild and
 dread,
 Swell'd with the voices of the dead;
 Far on the future battle-heath
 His eye beheld the ranks of death:
 Thus the lone Seer, from mankind
 hurl'd,
 Shaped forth a disembodied world.
 One lingering sympathy of mind
 Still bound him to the mortal kind;
 The only parent he could claim
 Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
 Late had he heard, in prophet's
 dream,
 The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;
 Sounds, too, had come in midnight
 blast,
 Of charging steeds, careering fast
 Along Benharrow's shingly side,
 Where mortal horseman ne'er might
 ride;
 The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
 All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
 He girt his loins, and came to show
 The signals of impending woe,
 And now stood prompt to bless or
 ban,
 As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepar'd;—and from the
 rock,
 A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
 Before the kindling pile was laid,
 And pierced by Roderick's ready
 blade.
 Patient the sickening victim eyed
 The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
 Down his clogg'd beard and shaggy
 limb,
 Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
 The grisly priest, with murmuring
 prayer,
 A slender crosslet form'd with care,
 A cubit's length in measure due;
 The shaft and limbs were rods of
 yew,
 Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave

Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's
 grave,
 And, answering Lomond's breezes
 deep,
 Soothe many a chieftain's endless
 sleep.
 The Cross, thus form'd, he held on
 high,
 With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings
 woke,
 While his anathema he spoke.

IX.

“Woe to the clansman, who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holi-
 est dew,
 On Alpine's dwelling low!
 Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
 He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
 But, from his sires and kindred
 thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just
 Shall doom him wrath and
 woe!”
 He paused;—the word the vassals
 took,
 With forward step and fiery look,
 On high their naked brands they
 shook,
 Their clattering targets wildly strook;
 And first in murmur low,
 Then, like the billow in his course,
 That far to seaward finds his source,
 And flings to shore his muster'd
 force,
 Burst, with loud roar, their answer
 hoarse,
 “Woe to the traitor, woe!”
 Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
 The joyous wolf from covert drew,
 The exulting eagle scream'd afar,—
 They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X.

The shout was hush'd on lake and
 fell,
 The monk resumed his mutter'd
 spell:
 Dismal and low its accents came,

The while he scathed the Cross with
flame;

And the few words that reach'd the
air,

Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer,
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—

“Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
Her home, the refuge of his fear,

A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volume flamed
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall pro-
claim,

While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and
shame,

And infamy and woe.”

Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling
trill

Of curses stammer'd slow;

Answering, with imprecation dread,
“Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless
head,

Woe doom to want and woe!”

A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the grey pass where birches
wave,

On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his labouring breath he
drew,

While, with set teeth and clenched
hand,

And eyes that glow'd like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
Who, summon'd to his Chieftain's
aid,

The signal saw and disobey'd.
The crosslet's points of sparkling
wood,

He quench'd among the bubbling
blood,

And, as again the sign he rear'd,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was
heard:

“When flits this Cross from man to
man,

Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!

Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,

Wolves make the coward heart their
prize!

As sinks that blood-stream in the
earth,

So may his heart's-blood drench his
hearth!

As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction
dark,

And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!”

He ceased; no echo gave agen
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
“Speed, Malise, speed!” he said,
and gave

The crosslet to his henchman brave.
“The muster-place be Lanrick
mead—

Instant the time—speed, Malise,
speed!”

Like heath-bird, when the hawks
pursue,

A barge across Loch Katrine flew;
High stood the henchman on the
prow;

So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launch'd
the boat,

Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had near'd the mainland
hill;

And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom
wide,

When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's
hide

On fleeter foot was never tied.

Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of
haste

Thine active sinews never braced.

Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;

With short and springing footstep
pass

The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,

And thread the brake like questing
hound;

The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate
leap:

Parch'd are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;

Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!

The wounded hind thou track'st not
now,

Pursuest not maid through green-
wood bough,

Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace,
With rivals in the mountain race;

But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—speed, Malise,
speed!

XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;

From winding glen, from upland
brown,

They pour'd each hardy tenant down.
Now slack'd the messenger his pace;

He show'd the sign, he named the
place,

And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.

The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and
brand;

With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swathe the scythe;

The herds without a keeper stray'd,
The plough was in mid-furrow staid,

The fal'ner toss'd his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;

Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rush'd to arms,
So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.

Alas! thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of
fear!

The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,

The lark's blithe carol, from the cloud,
Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed! the lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,

And peep, like moss-grown rocks,
half seen,

Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayest thou rest, thy labour
done,

Their Lord shall speed the signal
on.—

As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the
way.

—What woeful accents load the gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!

A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.

Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his
place!—

Within the hall, where torches' ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.

His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not
why;

The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach resound.

XVI.

Coronach.

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,

Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.

The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,

But to us comes no cheering,
'To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper
 Wails manhood in glory.
 The autumn winds rushing
 Waft the leaves that are searest,
 But our flower was in flushing,
 When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the Correi,*
 Sage counsel in cumber,
 Red hand in the foray,
 How sound is thy slumber!
 Like the dew on the mountain,
 Like the foam on the river,
 Like the bubble on the fountain,
 Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVII.

See Stumah, † who, the bier beside,
 His master's corpse with wonder
 eyed,
 Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
 Could send like lightning o'er the
 dew,
 Bristles his crest and points his ears,
 As if some stranger step he hears.
 'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
 Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
 But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
 Urge the precipitate career.
 All stand aghast:—unheeding all,
 The henchman bursts into the hall;
 Before the dead man's bier he stood;
 Held forth the Cross besmear'd with
 blood;
 "The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
 Speed forth the signal! clansmen,
 speed!"

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
 Sprung forth and seized the fatal
 sign.
 In haste the stripling to his side
 His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
 But when he saw his mother's eye
 Watch him in speechless agony,
 Back to her open'd arms he flew,
 Press'd on her lips a fond adieu—

* *Correi*, the hollow side of the hill where
 game usually lies.

† The name of a dog. The word is Celtic
 for "faithful."

"Alas!" she sobb'd,—“and yet, be
 gone,
 And speed thee forth, like Duncan's
 son!”
 One look he cast upon the bier,
 Dash'd from his eye the gathering
 tear,
 Breathed deep to clear his labouring
 breast,
 And toss'd aloft his bonnet crest,
 Then, like the high-bred colt, when,
 freed,
 First he essays his fire and speed,
 He vanish'd, and o'er moar and moss
 Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
 Suspended was the widow's tear,
 While yet his footsteps she could
 hear;
 And when she marked the hench-
 man's eye
 Wet with unwonted sympathy,
 “Kinsman,” she said, “his race is
 run,
 That should have sped thine errand
 on;
 The oak has fall'n,—the sapling
 bough
 Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
 Yet trust I well, his duty done,
 The orphan's God will guard my
 son.—
 And you, in many a danger true,
 At Duncan's hest your blades that
 drew,
 To arms, and guard that orphan's
 head!
 Let babes and women wail the dead.”
 Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
 Resounded through the funeral hall,
 While from the walls the attendant
 band
 Snatch'd sword and targe, with hur-
 ried hand;
 And short and flitting energy
 Glanced from the mourner's sunken
 eye,
 As if the sounds to warrior dear,
 Might rouse her Duncan from his
 bier.
 But faded soon that borrow'd force,
 Grief claim'd his right, and tears
 their course,

XIX.

Benedi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-
Ire.

O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus
knew;

The tear that gather'd in his eye
He left the mountain breeze to dry;
Until, where Feith's young waters
roll,

Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the sable strath with
green,

The chapel of St. Bride was seen.
Sworn was the stream, remote the
bridge,

But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizi-
zily,

Though reel'd his sympathetic eye,
He dash'd amid the torrent's roar:
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasp'd, to
guide

And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice—the foam splash'd
high,

With hoarser swell the stream raced
by;

And had he fall'n,—for ever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasp'd the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gain'd,
And up the chapel pathway strain'd.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning
tide,

Had sought the chapel of St. Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave.

And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude, but glad procession, came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
And plaided youth, with jest and
jeer,

Which snooded maiden would not
hear;

And children, that, unwitting why,

Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whos' downcast eye and cheek dis-
close

The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the kerchief's snowy band;
The gallant bridegroom by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of
cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the churchyard
gate?

The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soil'd he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed
word:

“The muster-place is Lanrick
mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman,
speed!”

And must he change so soon the
hand,

Just link'd to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day, so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted
bride!

O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's
trust,

Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on the
heath

Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the
Teith.

—What in the racer's bosom stirr'd?
The sickening pang of hope deferr'd,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burn-
ing,
And hope, from well-fought field re-
turning,

With war's red honours on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank
and brae,

Like fire from flint he glanced away,
Whilehigh resolve, and feeling strong,
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

Song.

The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken* curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far from love and thee,
Mary;

To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My versersong, thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely
brow,

I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the
foe,

His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee,
Mary.

And if return'd from conquer'd foes,
How blithely will the evening close,

* Fern.

How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me,
Mary!

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight
blaze,

Rushing, in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.

The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the
source

Alarm'd, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turn'd its rapid
road

Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might
claim

A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the grey sire, whose trembling
hand

Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.

Each valley, each sequester'd glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams
unite,

Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and
blood;

Each train'd to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's com-
mand.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick
Dhu

Survey'd the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and
heath,

To view the frontiers of Monteith.

All backward came with news of
 truce ;
 Still lay each martial Græme and
 Bruce,
 In Rednoch courts no horsemen
 wait,
 No banner waved on Cardross gate,
 On Duchray's towers no beacon
 shone,
 Nor scared the herons from Loch
 Con ;
 All seem'd at peace.—Now, wot ye
 why
 The Chieftain, with such anxious
 eye,
 Ere to the muster he repair,
 This western frontier scann'd with
 care?—
 In Benvenu's most darksome cleft,
 A fair, though cruel, pledge was left ;
 For Douglas, to his promise true,
 That morning from the isle withdrew,
 And in a deep sequester'd dell
 Had sought a low and lonely cell.
 By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
 Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung ;
 A softer name the Saxons gave,
 And call'd the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
 As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
 The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
 Yawn'd like a gash on warrior's
 breast ;
 Its trench had staid full many a rock,
 Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock
 From Benvenue's grey summit wild,
 And here, in random ruin piled,
 They frown'd incumbent o'er the
 spot,
 And form'd the rugged silvan grot.
 The oak and birch, with mingled
 shade,
 At noontide there a twilight made,
 Unless when short and sudden shone
 Some straggl'g beam on cliff or
 stone,
 With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
 Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
 No murmur waked the solemn still,
 Save tinkling of a fountain rill ;

But when the wind chafed with the
 lake,
 A sullen sound wou'd upward break,
 With dashing hollow voice, that
 spoke
 The incessant war of wave and rock.
 Suspended cliffs with hideous sway,
 Seem'd nodding o'er the cavern grey.
 From such a den the wolf had
 sprung,
 In such the wild-cat leaves her
 young ;
 Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
 Sought for a space their safety there.
 Grey Superstition's whisper dread
 Debarr'd the spot to vulgar tread ;
 For there, she said, did fays resort,
 And satyrs* hold their silvan court,
 By moonlight tread their mystic
 maze,
 And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
 Floated on Katrine bright and strong.
 When Roderick, with a chosen few,
 Repass'd the heights of Benvenue.
 Above the Goblin-cave they go,
 Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-
 bo :
 The prompt retainers speed before,
 To launch the shallop from the shore,
 For cross Loch Katrine lies his way
 To view the passes of Achray,
 And place his clansmen in array.
 Yet lags the chief in musing mind,
 Unwonted sight, his men behind.
 A single page, to bear his sword,
 Alone attended on his lord ;
 The rest their way through thickets
 break,
 And soon await him by the lake.
 It was a fair and gallant sight,
 To view them from the neighbouring
 height,
 By the low-level'd sunbeams light !
 For strength and stature, from the
 clan
 Each warrior was a chosen man,
 As even afar might well be seen,

* The Highlanders had a mythological
 satyr or urisk.

By their proud step and martial
mien.

Their feathers dance, their tartans
float,

Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain-
strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turn'd apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode.

It was but with that dawning morn,
That Roderick Dhu had proudly
sworn

To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove—
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless
ghost,

Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear,
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling
trees.

But hark! what mingles in the
strain?

It is the harp of Allan-Bane,
That wakes its measure slow and
high,

Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the
strings?

'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX.

Hymn to the Virgin.

Ave Maria! maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!

Thou canst hear though from the
wild,

Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banish'd, outcast, and re-
viled—

Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;

Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.

The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast
smiled;

Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's pray-
er;

Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.

We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn—
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As list'ning still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page, with humble sign,
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him
cast,

"It is the last time—'tis the last,"
He mutter'd thrice,—"the last time
e'er

That angel voice shall Roderick hear!"
It was a goading thought—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where muster'd, in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made,
Some sate, some stood, some slowly
stray'd;

But most with mantles folded round,
 Were couch'd to rest upon the ground,
 Scarce to be known by curious eye,
 From the deep heather where they lie,
 So well was match'd the tartan screen
 With heath-bell dark and brackens
 green ;
 Unless where, here and there, a blade,
 Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
 Like glow-worm twinkling through
 the shade.
 But when, advancing through the
 gloom,
 They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
 Their shout of welcome, shrill and
 wide,
 Shook the steep mountain's steady
 side.
 Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
 Three times return'd the martial yell;
 It died upon Bochastle's plain,
 And Silence claim'd her evening
 reign.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Prophecy.

I.

"The rose is fairest when 'tis bud-
 ding new,
 And hope is brightest when it
 dawns from fears;
 The rose is sweetest wash'd with
 morning dew,
 And love is loveliest when em-
 balm'd in tears.
 O wilding rose, whom fancy thus en-
 dears,
 I bid your blossoms in my bonnet
 wave,
 Emblem of hope and love through
 future years!"
 Thus spoke young Norman, heir of
 Armandave,
 What time the sun arose on Vennach-
 ar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
 Love prompted to the bridegroom's
 tongue.

All while he stripp'd the wild-rose
 spray,
 His axe and bow beside him lay.
 For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
 A wakeful sentinel he stood.
 Hark! on the rock a footstep rung,
 And instant to his arms he sprung.
 "Stand, or thou diest!—What, Ma-
 lise?—soon
 Art thou return'd from Braes of
 Doune.
 By thy keen step and glance I know,
 Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."—
 (For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
 On distant scout had Malise gone.)
 "Where sleeps the Chief?" the
 henchman said.—
 "Apart, in yonder misty glade;
 To his lone couch I'll be your guide."—
 Then call'd a slumberer by his side,
 And stirr'd him with his slacken'd
 bow—
 "Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
 We seek the Chieftain; on the track,
 Keep eagle watch till I come back."

III.

Together up the pass they sped:
 "What of the foeman?" Norman
 said.—
 "Varying reports from near and far;
 This certain—that a band of war
 Has for two days been ready boune,
 At prompt command, to march from
 Doune;
 King James, the while, with princely
 powers,
 Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
 Soon will this dark and gathering
 cloud
 Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
 Inured to bide such bitter bout,
 The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
 But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
 A shelter for thy bonny bride?"
 "What! know ye not that Roderick's
 care
 To the lone isle hath caused repair
 Each maid and matron of the clan,
 And every child and aged man
 Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
 Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,

Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?"

IV.

"'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's
plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick
Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?"—
"It is because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm call'd; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they
slew."

MALISE.

"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry-men Gallan-
gad.
His hide was snow, his horns were
dark,
His red eye glow'd like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Scarcely did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikemen's
goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row,
A child might scatheless stroke his
brow."—

V.

NORMAN.

"That bull was slain: his reeking hide
They stretch'd the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
Couch'd on a shelf beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents
sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong
sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,

Midst groan of rock, and roar of
stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor distant rests the Chief;—but
hush!
See, gliding slow through mist and
bush,
The hermit gains yon rock, and
stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughter'd host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is
broke,
His morsel claims with sullen croak?"

MALISE.

—"Peace! peace! to other than to
me,
Thy words were evil augury;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, glean'd from heaven
or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and
now,
Together they descend the brow."

VI.

And as they came, with Alpine's
Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word:
"Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
For man endow'd with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can
still
Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's
lance,—
'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, my eyeballs dim,
My soul, with harrowing anguish
torn,—
This for my Chieftain have I borne!—
The shapes that sought my fearful
couch,
A human tongue may ne'er avouch;

No mortal man,—save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law,—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fatal answer came,
In characters of living flame!
Not spoke in word, nor blaz'd in
scroll,

But borne and branded on my soul;—
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S
LIFE,

THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE!"

VII.

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and
care!

Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
But first our broadswords tasted
blood.

A surer victim still I know,
Self-offer'd to the auspicious blow:
A spy has sought my land this morn,—
No eye shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on those shall bring him
down.

—But see, who comes his news to
show!

Malise! what tidings of the foe?"—

VIII.

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and
glaive

Two Barons proud their banners
wave.

I saw the Moray's silver star,
And mark'd the sable pale of Mar."—

"By Alpine's soul, high tidings
those!

I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?"—"To-morrow's
noon

Will see them here for battle boune."

"Then shall it see a meeting stern!—
But, for the place—say, couldst thou
learn

Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?

Strengthen'd by them, we well might
bide

The battle on Benledi's side.
Thou couldst not?—Well! Clan-
Alpine's men

Shall man the Trosach's shaggy glen;
Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll
fight,

All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
Each for his hearth and household
fire,

Father for child, and son for sire,—
Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
Is it the breeze affects mine eye?

Or dost thou come, ill-omen'd tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?

No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,

Than doubt or terror can pierce
through

The unyielding heart of Roderick
Dhu!

'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.—
Each to his post!—all know their
charge."

The pibroch sounds, the bands ad-
vance,

The broadswords gleam, the banners
dance,

Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
—I turn me from the martial roar,

And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the grey stone

Fast by the cave, and makes her
moan

While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are pour'd on her unheeding ear.—

"He will return—Dear lady, trust!—
With joy return;—he will—he must.

Well was it time to seek, afar,
Some refuge from impending war,

When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged
swarm

Are cow'd by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats, with many a light,

Floating the live-long yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth

By the red streamers of the north;
I mark'd at morn how close they ride,

Thick moor'd by the lone islet's side,
Like wild-duck's couching in the fen,
When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"

X.

ELLEN.

"No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
My waketul terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting blessing gave,
The tear that glisten'd in his eye
Drown'd not his purpose fix'd on
high.

My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturb'd by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.

He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden, when the theme
Turn'd, Allan, on thine idle dream,
Of Malbolm Græme, in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him
wound.

Think'st thou he trow'd thine omen
aught?

Oh no! 'twas apprehensive thought
For the kind youth,—for Roderick
too—

(Let me be just) that friend so true;
In danger both, and in our cause!

Minstrel, the Douglas, dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,

'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,

If e'er return him not again,
Am I to hie, and make me known?

Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friend's safety with his
own;—

He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his
son!"—

XI.

"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
He only named yon holy fane

As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he's safe; and for the
Græme,—

Heaven's blessing on his gallant
name!—

My vision'd sight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.

When did my gifted dream beguile?
Think of the stranger at the isle,

And think upon the harpings slow,
That presaged this approaching woe?

Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.

Would we have left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.

Of such a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe,

My harp was wont thy grief to
cheer."—

ELLEN.

"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear."
The Minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

Ballad.

ALICE BRAND.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
Where the mavis* and merlet† are
singing,

When the deer sweeps by, and the
hounds are in cry,

And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;

And we must hold by wood and
wold,

As outlaws wont to do.

"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so
bright,

And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless

flight,

Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,

*Mavis, a thrush.

†Merle, a blackbird

For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

“And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaugh-
ter'd deer,
To keep the cold away.”—

“O Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance,
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

“If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet
grey,
As gay the forest green.

“And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.”

XIII.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green-
wood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's
brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who wonn'd within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd
church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

“Why sounds yon stroke on beech
and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?”

“Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christen'd man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For mutter'd word or ban.

“Lay on him the curse of the with-
er'd heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life
would part,
Nor yet find leave to die.”

XIV.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good green-
wood,
Though the birds have still'd their
singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is faggots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf
Before Lord Richard stands,
And, as he cross'd and bless'd him-
self,
“I fear not sign,” quoth the grisly
elf,
“That is made with bloody hands.”

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear,—
“And if there's blood upon his hand,
'Tis but the blood of deer.”

“Now loud thou liest, thou bold of
mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand.”

Then forward stepp'd she, Alice
Brand,
And made the holy sign,—
“And if there's blood on Richard's
hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

“And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?”—

XV.

Ballad continued.

“'Tis merry, 'tis merry in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,

When the court doth ride by their
monarch's side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show,
Like the idle gleam that December's
beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And 'twixt life and death, was snatch'd
away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

"But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mold,
As fair a form as thine."

She cross'd him once—she cross'd
him twice—

That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She cross'd him thrice, that lady bold,
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are
singing,
But merrier were they in Dunferm-
line grey,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were
staid,
A stranger climb'd the steepy glade:
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims,
'Tis Snowdon's Knight, 'tis James
Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,

Then, starting, scarce suppress'd a
scream:

"O stranger! in such hour of fear,
What evil hap has brought thee
here?"—

"An evil hap how can it be,
That bids me look again on thee?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marshall'd, over bank and bourn,
The happy path of my return."—

"The happy path!—what! said he
nought

Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded pass?"—"No, by my
faith!

Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."—

"O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
—Yonder his tartans I discern;
Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
That he will guide the strangers sure!—
What prompted thee, unhappy man?
The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
Had not been bribed by love or fear,
Unknown to him to guide thee
here."—

XVII.

"Sweet Helen, dear my life must be,
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath,
When love or honour's weigh'd with
death.

Then let me profit by my chance,
And speak my purpose bold at once.
I come to bear thee from a wild,
Where ne'er before such blossom
smiled,

By this soft hand to lead thee far
From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower."—
"O! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female
art,

To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous
track;

And how, O how, can I atone
 The wreck my vanity brought on!—
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—
 Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
 Thou, whose light folly bears the
 blame,
 Buy thine own pardon with thy
 shame!
 But first—my father is a man
 Outlaw'd and exiled, under ban;
 The price of blood is on his head,
 With me 'twere infamy to wed.—
 Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear
 the truth!
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
 If yet he is!—exposed for me
 And mine to dread extremity—
 Thou hast the secret of my heart:
 Forgive, be generous, and depart!"

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
 A lady's fickle heart to gain;
 But here he knew and felt them
 vain.
 There shot no glance from Ellen's
 eye,
 To give her steadfast speech the lie;
 In maiden confidence she stood,
 Though mantled in her cheek the
 blood,
 And told her love with such a sigh
 Of deep and hopeless agony,
 As death had seal'd her Malcolm's
 doom,
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
 Hope vanish'd from Fitz-James's eye,
 But not with hope fled sympathy.
 He proffer'd to attend her side,
 As brother would a sister guide.—
 "O! little know'st thou Roderick's
 heart!
 Safer for both we go apart.
 O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
 If thou may'st trust yon wily kern."
 With hand upon his forehead laid,
 The conflict of his mind to shade,
 A parting step or two he made;
 Then, as some thought had cross'd
 his brain,
 He paused, and turn'd, and came
 again.

XIX.

"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!—
 It chanced in fight that my poor
 sword

Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
 This ring the grateful monarch gave,
 And bade when I had boon to crave,
 To bring it back, and boldly claim
 The recompense that I would name.
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
 But one who lives by lance and
 sword,

Whose castle is his helm and shield,
 His lordship the embattled field.
 What from a prince can I demand,
 Who neither wreck of state nor land?
 Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
 Each guard and usher knows the
 sign.

Seek thou the king without delay;
 This signet shall secure thy way;
 And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
 As ransom of his pledge to me."
 He placed the golden circlet on,
 Paused—kiss'd her hand—and then
 was gone.

The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
 So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
 He join'd his guide, and wending
 down

The ridges of the mountain brown,
 Across the stream they took their
 way,
 That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosach's glen was still,
 Noontide was sleeping on the hill;
 Sudden his guide whoop'd loud and
 high—

"Murdoch! was that a signal cry?"—
 He stammer'd forth,——"I shout to
 scare

Yon raven from his dainty fare."
 He look'd—he knew the raven's prey,
 His own brave steed:—"Ah! gallant
 grey!

For thee—for me, perchance—'twere
 well

We ne'er had seen the Trosach's
 dell.—

Murdoch, move first—but silently;

Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt
die!"

Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tatter'd weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seem'd nought to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreath'd with gaudy
broom;

With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had
sought,

Where scarce was footing for the
goat.

The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shriek'd till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laugh'd when near they
drew,

For then the Lowland garb she knew;
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she
sung—

She sung!—the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might
chime;

And now, though strain'd and rough-
en'd, still

Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

Song.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warp'd and
wrung—

I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan* glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray

That Heaven would close my wintry
day!

'Twas thus my hair they bade me
braid,
They made me to the church re-
pair;

It was my bridal morn they said,
And my true love would meet me
there.

But woe betide the cruel guile,
That drown'd in blood the morning
smile!

And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only wak'd to sob and scream.

XXIII.

"Who is this maid? what means
her lay?

She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle grey,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring."—
" 'Tis Blanche of Devan," Murdoch
said,

"A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick foray'd Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquer'd
blade;

I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's
charge.—

Hence, brain-sick fool!"—He raised
his bow:—

"Now, if thou strikest her but one
blow,

I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitch'd a bar!"—

"Thanks, champion, thanks!" the
Maniac cried,

And press'd her to Fitz-James's side.
"See the grey pennons I prepare,

To seek my true-love through the air;
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!

No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
The-wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,

By bush and briar in mid-air staid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."—

* *Allan* and *Devan*, two rivers running
through Stirling Plain.

XXIV.

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"—

"O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.—
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

"For O my sweet William was for-
ester true,

He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood
hue,

And so blithely he trill'd the Low-
land lay!

"It was not that I meant to tell
But thou art wise and guessest well."

Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
She fix'd her apprehensive eye;
Then turn'd it on the Knight, and
then

Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

"The toils are pitch'd, and the
stakes are set,

Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives
they whet,
Hunters live so cherrily.

"It was a stag, a stag of ten,*
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

"It was there he met with a wounded
doe,

She was bleeding deathfully;
She warn'd him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed—
Hunters watch so narrowly."

* Of ten branches to his antlers; a royal or noble deer.

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-toss'd,
When Ellen's hints and fears were
lost;

But Murdoch's shout suspicion
wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction
brought.—

Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
"Disclose thy treachery, or die!"
Forth at full speed the Clansman
flew,

But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's
crest,

And thrill'd in Blanche's faded
breast,—

Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!

Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life!
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couch'd upon the heathery
moor;

Them couldst thou reach—it may not
be—

Thine ambush'd kin thou ne'er shalt
see,

The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
—Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must
strain,

Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die;
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen-tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laugh'd;
Her wreath of broom and feathers
grey,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.

The Knight to stanch the life-stream
tried,—

“Stranger, it is in vain!” she cried.
“This hour of death has given me
more

Of reason’s power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress?—O! still I’ve
worn

This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimm’d its
shine.

I will not tell thee when ’twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim’s
head—

My brain would turn!—but it shall
wave

Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the
stain,

And thou wilt bring it me again.—
I waver still.—O God! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light!—
O! by thy knighthood’s honour’d
sign,

And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine’s
Clan,

With tartans broad and shadowy
plume,

And hand of blood, and brow of
gloom,

Bethy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devon’s
wrong!—

They watch for thee by pass and
fell . . .

Avoid the path O God!
farewell.”

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast pour’d his eyes at pity’s claims,
And now with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murder’d maid expire.

“God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!”
A lock from Blanche’s tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom’s
hair;

The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:

“By Him whose word is truth! I
swear,

No other favour will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue

In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
—But hark! what means yon faint
halloo?

The chase is up,—but they shall know,
The stag at bay’s a dangerous foe.”

Barr’d from the known but guarded
way

Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James
must stray,

And oft must change his desperate
track,

By stream and precipice turn’d back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at
length,

From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couch’d him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils
o’er:—

“Of all my rash adventures past,
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Who e’er so mad but might have
guess’d,

That all this Highland hornet’s nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e’er they heard of bands at
Doune?—

Like bloodhounds now they search
me out,—

Hark, to the whistle and the shout!—
If farther through the wilds I go,

I only fall upon the foe:
I’ll couch me here till evening grey,

Then darkling try my dangerous
way.”

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;
Enough remains of glimmering light

To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
 Yet not enough from far to show
 His figure to the watchful foe.
 With cautious step, and ear awake,
 He climbs the crag and threads the
 brake;
 And not the summer solstice, there,
 Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
 But every breeze, that swept the wold,
 Benumb'd his drenched limbs with
 cold.

In dread, in danger, and alone,
 Famish'd and chill'd, through ways
 unknown,
 Tangled and steep, he journey'd on;
 Till, as a rock's huge point he turn'd,
 A watch-fire close before him burn'd.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear,
 Bask'd, in his plaid, a mountaineer;
 And up he sprung with sword in
 hand,—
 "Thy name and purpose! Saxon,
 stand!"—
 "A stranger."—"What dost thou re-
 quire?"—
 "Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
 My life's beset, my path is lost,
 The gale has chill'd my limbs with
 frost."—
 "Art thou a friend to Roderick?"—
 "No."—
 "Thou darest not call thyself a foe?"—
 "I dare! to him and all the band
 He brings to aid his murderous
 hand."—
 "Bold words!—but, though the beast
 of game
 The privilege of chase may claim,
 Though space and law the stag we
 lend,
 Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,
 Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
 The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain?
 Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure
 they lie,
 Who say thou camest a secret spy!"—
 "They do, by heaven!—Come Roder-
 ick Dhu,
 And of his clan the boldest two,
 And let me but till morning rest,

I write the falsehood on their crest. —
 "If by the blaze I mark aright,
 Thou bear'st the belt and spur of
 Knight."—
 "Then by these tokens mayest thou
 know
 Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."—
 "Enough, enough; sit down and share
 A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
 The harden'd flesh of mountain deer;
 Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
 And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
 He tended him like welcome guest,
 Then thus his farther speech ad-
 dress'd.

"Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
 A clansman born, a kinsman true;
 Each word against his honour spoke,
 Demands of me avenging stroke;
 Yet more,—upon thy fate, 'tis said,
 A mighty augury is laid,
 It rests with me to wind my horn,—
 Thou art with numbers overborne,
 It rests with me, here, brand to
 brand,
 Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
 But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
 Will I depart from honour's laws;
 To assail a wearied man were shame,
 And stranger is a holy name;
 Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
 In vain he never must require.
 Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
 Myself will guide thee on the way,
 O'er stock and stone, through watch
 and ward,
 Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
 As far as Coilantogle's ford;
 From thence thy warrant is thy
 sword."—
 "I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
 As freely as 'tis nobly given!"
 "Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
 Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
 With that he shook the gather'd heath,
 And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
 And the brave foemen, side by side
 Lay peaceful down, like brother's
 tried,

And slept until the dawning beam
 Purpled the mountain and the
 stream.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Combat.

I.

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern
 light,
 When first, by the bewilder'd pil-
 grim spied,
 It smiles upon the dreary brow of
 night,
 And silvers o'er the torrent's foam-
 ing tide,
 And lights the fearful path on moun-
 tain side,
 Fair as that beam, although the
 fairest far,
 Giving to horror grace, to danger
 pride,
 Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's
 bright star,
 Through all the wreckful storms that
 cloud the brow of War.

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
 Was twinkling through the hazel
 screen,
 When, rousing at its glimmer red,
 The warriors left their lowly bed,
 Look'd out upon the dappled sky,
 Mutter'd their soldier matins by,
 And then awaked their fire, to steal,
 As short and rude, their soldier meal.
 That o'er, the Gael* around him threw
 His graceful plaid of varied hue,
 And, true to promise, led the way,
 By thicket green and mountain grey.
 A wildering path!—they winded now
 Along the precipice's brow,
 Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
 The windings of the Forth and Teith,
 And all the vales beneath that lie,
 Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
 Then, sunk in copse, their farthest
 glance

*Gael, the ancient or Celtic name of a High-
 lander.

Gain'd not the length of horseman's
 lance.

'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
 Assistance from the hand to gain;
 So tangled oft, that bursting through,
 Each hawthorn shed her showers of
 dew,—
 That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
 It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III.

At length they came where, stern and
 steep,
 The hill sinks down upon the deep.
 Here Vennachar in silver flows,
 There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
 Ever the hollow path twined on,
 Beneath steep bank and threatening
 stone;
 An hundred men might hold the
 post
 With hardihood against a host.
 The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
 Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
 With shingles bare, and cliffs be-
 tween,
 And patches bright of bracken green,
 And heather black, that waved so
 high,
 It held the copse in rivalry.
 But where the lake slept deep and
 still,
 Dank ozers fringed the swamp and
 hill;
 And oft both path and hill were torn,
 Where wintry torrents down had
 borne,
 And heap'd upon the cumber'd land
 Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
 So toilsome was the road to trace,
 The guide, abating of his pace,
 Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
 And ask'd Fitz-James, by what
 strange cause
 He sought these wilds? traversed by
 few,
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

“Brave Gael, my pass in danger
 tried,
 Hangs in my belt and by my side;

Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,
 "I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
 When here, but three days since, I
 came,
 Bewilder'd in pursuit of game,
 All seem'd as peaceful and as still,
 As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
 Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
 Nor soon expected back from war.
 Thus said, at least, my mountain-
 guide,
 Though deep, perchance, the villain
 lied."—
 "Yet why a second venture try?"
 "A warrior thou, and ask me why!—
 Moves our free course by such fix'd
 cause,
 As gives the poor mechanic laws:
 Enough, I sought to drive away
 The lazy hours of peaceful day:
 Slight cause will then suffice to guide
 A Knight's free footsteps far and
 wide—
 A falcon flown, a greyhound stray'd,
 The merry glance of mountain-maid:
 Or, if a path be dangerous known,
 The danger's self is lure alone."

V.

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
 Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?"
 —"No, by my word;—of bands pre-
 pared
 To guard King James's sports I
 heard;
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they
 hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful
 hung."—
 "Free be they flung!—for we were
 loth
 Their silken folds should feast the
 moth.
 Free be they flung!—as free shall
 wave
 Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
 But, Stranger, peaceful since you
 came,

Bewilder'd in the mountain game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you
 show
 Vich-Alpine's vow'd and mortal
 foe?"—
 "Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
 Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick
 Dhu,
 Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabb'd a knight:
 Yet this alone might from his part
 Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
 Dark lower'd the clansman's sable
 scowl,
 A space he paused, then sternly said,
 "And heard'st thou why he drew his
 blade?
 Heard'st thou that shameful word
 and blow
 Brought Roderick's vengeance on his
 foe?
 What reck'd the Chieftain if he stood
 On Highland's heath, or Holy-Rood?
 He rights such wrong where it is
 given,
 If it were in the court of heav-
 en."—
 "Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
 Not then claim'd sovereignty his due;
 While Albany, with feeble hand,
 Held borrow'd truncheon of com-
 mand,
 The young King, mew'd in Stirling
 tower,
 Was stranger to respect and power.
 But then, thy Chieftain's robber
 life!—
 Winning mean prey by causeless
 strife,
 Wrenching from ruin'd Lowland
 swain
 His herds and harvest rear'd in
 vain.—
 Methinks a soul, like thine, should
 scorn
 The spoils from such foul foray
 borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
 And answer'd with disdainful smile,—
 "Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
 I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
 Far to the south and east, where lay,
 Extended in succession gay,
 Deep waving fields and pastures
 green,
 With gentle slopes and groves be-
 tween:—

These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
 Were once the birthright of the Gael;
 The stranger came with iron hand,
 And from our fathers reft the land.
 Where dwell we now? See, rudely
 swell

Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
 Ask we this savage hill we tread,
 For fatten'd steer or household bread:
 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
 And well the mountain might reply,—
 'To you, as to your sires of yore,
 Belong the target and claymore!
 I give you shelter in my breast,
 Your own good blades must win the
 rest.'

Pent in this fortress of the North,
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,
 And from the robber rend the prey?
 Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
 While, of ten thousand herds, there
 strays

But one along yon river's maze,—
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall, with strong hand, redeem his
 share.

Where live the mountain chiefs who
 hold,
 That plundering Lowland field and
 fold

Is aught but retribution true?
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick
 Dhu."—

VIII.

Answer'd Fitz-James,—"And, if I
 sought,
 Think'st thou no other could be
 brought?

What deem ye of my path waylaid?
 My life given o'er to ambuscade?"—
 "As of a meed to rashness due:
 Hadst thou sent warning fair and
 true,—

I seek my hound, or falcon stray'd,
 I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
 Free hadst thou been to come and go;
 But secret path mark secret foe.
 Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
 Hadst thou, unheard, been doom'd
 to die,

Save to fulfil an augury."—
 "Well, let it pass; nor will I now
 Fresh cause of enmity vow,
 To chafe thy mood and cloud thy
 brow.

Enough, I am by promise tied
 To match me with this man of pride:
 Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's
 glen

In peace; but when I come agen,
 I come with banner, brand, and
 bow,

As leader seeks his mortal foe.
 For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
 Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
 As I, until before me stand
 This rebel Chieftain and his band!"—

IX.

"Have, then, thy wish!"—he whistled
 shrill,

And he was answer'd from the hill;
 Wild as the scream of the curlew,
 From crag to crag the signal flew.
 Instant, through copse and heath,
 arose

Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
 On right, on left, above, below,
 Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
 From shingles grey their lances start,
 The bracken bush sends forth the
 dart,

The rushes and the willow-wand
 Are bristling into axe and brand,
 And every tuft of broom gives life
 To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.
 That whistle garrison'd the glen
 At once with full five hundred men,
 As if the yawning hill to heaven
 A subterranean host had given.

Watching their leader's beck and will,
 All silent there they stood, and still.
 Like the loose crags, whose threaten-
 ing mass
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
 As if an infant's touch would urge
 Their headlong passage down the
 verge,

With step and weapon forward flung,
 Upon the mountain-side they hung.
 The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
 Along Benedi's living side,
 Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
 Full on Fitz-James — "How say'st
 thou now?"

These are Clan-Alpine's warriors
 true;
 And, Saxon, — I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave: — Though to
 his heart
 The life-blood thrill'd with sudden
 start,

He mann'd himself with dauntless
 air,

Return'd the chief his haughty stare,
 His back against a rock he bore,
 And firmly placed his foot before: —
 "Come one, come all! this rock shall
 fly

From its firm base as soon as I."

Sir Roderick mark'd — and in his eyes
 Respect was mingled with surprise,
 And the stern joy which warriors feel
 In foemen worthy of their steel.

Short space he stood — then waver'd
 his hand:

Down sunk the disappearing band;
 Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
 In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
 Sunk brand and spear and bended
 bow,

In osiers pale and copses low;
 It seem'd as if their mother Earth
 Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
 The wind's last breath had toss'd in
 air,

Pennon, and plaid, and plumage
 fair, —
 The next but swept a lone hill-side,

Where heath and fern were waving
 wide:

The sun's last glance was glinted
 back

From spear and glaive, from targe
 and jack, —

The next, all unreflected, shone
 On bracken green, and cold grey
 stone.

XI.

Fitz-James look'd round — yet scarce
 believed

The witness that his sight received;
 Such apparition well might seem
 Delusion of a dreadful dream.

Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
 And to his look the Chief replied,
 "Fear nought — nay, that I need not
 say —

But — doubt not ought from mine ar-
 ray.

Thou art my guest; — I pledged my
 word

As far as Coilantogle ford:
 Nor would I call a clansman's brand
 For aid against one valiant hand,
 Though on our strife lay every vale
 Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.

So move we on; — I only meant
 To show the reed on which you leant,
 Deeming this path you might pursue
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu."

They moved: — I said Fitz-James was
 brave,

As ever knight that belted glaive;
 Yet dare not say, that now his blood
 Kept on its wont and temper'd flood,
 As, following Roderick's stride, he
 drew

That seeming lonesome pathway
 through,

Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
 With lances, that, to take his life,
 Waited but signal from a guide,
 So late dishonour'd and defied.

Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
 The vanish'd guardians of the ground,
 And still, from copse and heather
 deep,

Fancy saw spear and broadsword
 peep,

And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush, nor bush of broom was
near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reach'd that torrent's sounding
shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty
lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and cease-
less mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the
world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.
And here his course the Chieftain
staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:—
“Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless
man,
This head of a rebellous clan,
Hath led thee safe through watch and
ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt
feel.
See here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand:
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy
sword.”

XIII.

The Saxon paused:—“Ine'er delay'd,
When foeman bade me draw my
blade;
Nay, more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy
death:
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:

Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?”—“No, Strang-
er, none!

And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate, by prophet
bred

Between the living and the dead:
‘Who spills the foremost foeman's
life,

His party conquers in the strife.’”—
“Then, by my word,” the Saxon said,
“The riddle is already read.

Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and
stiff.

Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.

To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and
word,

That, to thy native strengths re-
stored,

With each advantage shalt thou
stand,

That aids thee now to guard thy
land.”

XIV.

Dark lightning flash'd from Rode-
rick's eye—

“Soars thy presumption, then, so
high,

Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?

He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate:—

My clansman's blood demands re-
venge.

Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I
change

My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet knight,

Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear

A braid of his fair lady's hair.”—

“I thank thee, Roderick, for the
word!

It nerves my heart, it steels my
sword;

For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy
vein.

Now, truce farewell! and, ruth, be-
gone!—

Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown!
Though not from copse, or heath, or
cairn,

Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not—doubt not—which thou
wilt—

We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.”—
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard
threw,
Each look'd to sun, and stream, and
plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye op-
posed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-
hide

Had death so often dash'd aside;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and
shield.

He practiced every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to
guard;

While less expert, though stronger
far,

The Gael maintain'd unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they
stood,

And thrice the Saxon blade drank
blood;

No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And shower'd his blows like wintry
rain;

And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,

Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill:
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his
hand,

And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud chieftain to his
knee.

XVI.

“Now, yield thee, or by Him who
made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my
blade!”

“Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die.”
—Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the
toil,

Like mountain-cat who guards her
young,

Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but reck'd not of a wound,
And lock'd his arms his foeman
round,—

Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee
thrown!

That desperate grasp thy frame might
feel,

Through bars of brass and triple
steel!—

They tug, they strain! down, down
they go,

The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat com-
press'd,

His knee was planted on his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his
sight,

Then gleam'd aloft his dagger
bright!—

—But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleam'd on
high,

Reel'd soul and sense, reel'd brain
and eye,

Down came the blow! but in the
heath

The erring blade found bloodless sheath.

The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He falter'd thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeem'd, unhop'd, from desperate strife;

Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appear'd his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipt the braid,—

“Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid:

Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that Faith and Valour give.”

With that he blew a bugle-note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen

Four mounted squires in Lincoln green:

Two who bear lance, and two who lead,

By loosen'd rein, a saddled steed:
Each onward held his headlong course,

And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—

With wonder view'd the bloody spot—

—“Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—

You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;

Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight:
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high;—I must be boune,*

To see the archer-game at noon:
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII.

“Stand, Bayard, stand!”—the steed obey'd,

With arching neck and bending head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear
As if he loved his lord to hear.

No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreath'd his left hand in the mane,

And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turn'd on the horse his arm'd heel,
And stirr'd his courage with the steel.

Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launch'd, along the plain they go.

They dash'd that rapid torrent through,

And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop prick'd the Knight,
His merry-men follow'd as they might.

Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,

And in the race they mock'd thy tide;

Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast:

They rise, the banner'd towers of Doune,

They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoof strike fire,

They sweep like breeze through Ochertyre;

They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;

They bathe their courser's sweltering sides,

Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,

With splash, with scramble, and with bound.

*Boune, prepared.

Right-hand they leave thy cliffs,
 Craig-Forth!
 And soon the bulwark of the North,
 Grey Stirling, with her towers and
 town,
 Upon their fleet career look'd down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strain'd
 Sudden his steed the leader rein'd ;
 A signal to his squire he flung,
 Who instant to his stirrup sprung :—
 "Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woods-
 man grey,

Who town-ward holds the rocky way,
 Of stature tall and poor array ?

Mark'st thou the firm, yet active
 stride,

With which he scales the mountain-
 side ?

Know'st thou from whence he comes,
 or whom ?"—

"No, by my word ;—a burley groom
 He seems, who in the field or chase
 A baron's train would nobly grace."—

"Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
 And jealousy, no sharper eye ?

Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
 That stately form and step I knew ;
 Like form in Scotland is not seen,
 Treads not such step on Scottish
 green.

'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle !
 The uncle of the banish'd Earl.

Away, away, to court, to show
 The near approach of dreaded foe :

The King must stand upon his guard:
 Douglas and he must meet prepared."
 Then right-hand wheel'd their steeds,
 and straight

They won the castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
 From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
 Now, as he climb'd the rocky shelf,
 Held sad communion with himself!—
 "Held all is true my fears could
 frame :

A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel
 The vengeance of the royal steel.
 I, only I, can ward their fate,—

God grant the ransom come not late !
 The Abbess hath her promise given,
 My child shall be the bride of Hea-
 ven ;—

—Be pardon'd one repining tear !
 For He, who gave her, knows how
 dear,

How excellent ! but that is by,
 And now my business is—to die.
 —Ye towers! within whose circuit
 dread

A Douglas by his sovereign bled ;
 And thou ! O sad and fatal mound !*
 That oft hast heard the death-axe
 sound,

As on the noblest of the land
 Fell the stern headsman's bloody
 hand,—

The dungeon, block, and nameless
 tomb

Prepare— for Douglas seeks his
 doom !

—But hark ! what blithe and jolly peal
 Makes the Franciscan steeple reel ?

And see ! upon the crowded street,
 In motley groups what masquers
 meet !

Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
 And merry morrice-dancers come.

I guess, by all this quaint array,
 The burghers hold their sports to-
 day.

James will be there ; he loves such
 show,

Where the good yeoman bends his
 bow,

And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
 As well as where, in proud career,

The high-born tilter shivers spear,
 I'll follow to the Castle-park,

And play my prize ;—King James
 shall mark,

If age has tamed these sinews stark,
 Whose force so oft, in happier days,
 His boyish wonder loved to praise."

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung,
 The quivering drawbridge rock'd and
 rung,

* A mound on the N.E. of Stirling Castle,
 where State criminals were executed.

And echo'd loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles
went,

While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blush'd for pride
and shame.

And well the simperer might be
vain,—
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint at-
tire,

Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their
acclaims,

“Long live the Commons' King,
King James!”

Behind the King throng'd peer and
knight,

And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brook'd the
stay

Of the steep street and crowded way.
—But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern;
There nobles mourn'd their pride
restrain'd,

And the mean burgher's joys dis-
dain'd;

And chiefs, who, hostage for their
clan,

Were each from home a banish'd
man,

There thought upon their own gray
tower,

Their waving woods, their feudal
power,

And deem'd themselves a shameful
part

Of pageant which they cursed in
heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their chequer'd bands the joyous
rout.

There morricers, with bell at hecl,
And blade in hand, their mazes
wheel;

But chief, beside the butts, there
stand

Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marion, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.

The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
His first shaft centered in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas
take

A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watch'd, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympa-
thy,—

No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to
hand,

The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor call'd in vain; for Douglas came.
—For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloo's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades
bare.

Prize of the wrestling match, the
King

To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.

Douglas would speak, but in his
breast

His struggling soul his words sup-
press'd;

Indignant then he turn'd him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.

When each his utmost strength had
shown,

The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone

From its deep bed, then heaved it
 high,
 And sent the fragment through the
 sky,
 A rood beyond the farthest mark;—
 And still in Stirling's royal park,
 The grey-hair'd sires, who know the
 past,
 To strangers point the Douglas-cast,
 And moralize on the decay
 Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
 The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
 The King, with look unmoved, be-
 stow'd

A purse well-fill'd with picces broad.
 Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
 And threw the gold among the crowd,
 Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
 And sharper glance, the dark grey
 man;

Till whispers rose among the throng,
 That heart so free, and hand so strong,
 Must to the Douglas blood belong;
 The old men mark'd, and shook the
 head,

To see his hair with silver spread,
 And wink'd aside, and told each son,
 Of feats upon the English done,
 Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
 Was exiled from his native land.

The women praised his stately form,
 Though wreck'd by many a winter's
 storm!

The youth with awe and wonder saw
 His strength surpassing Nature's law.
 Thus judged, as is their wont, the
 crowd,

Till murmur rose to clamours loud.
 But not a glance from that proud ring
 Of peers who circled round the King,
 With Douglas held communion kind,
 Or call'd the banish'd man to mind;
 No, not from those who, at the chase,
 Once held his side the honour'd place,
 Begirt his board, and, in the field,
 Found safety underneath his shield;
 For he, whom royal eyes disown,
 When was his form to courtiers
 known!

XXV.

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
 And bade let loose a gallant stag,
 Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
 Two favourite greyhounds should
 pull down,
 That venison free, and Bordeaux
 wine,

Might serve the archery to dine.
 But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
 Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
 The fleetest hound in all the North,—
 Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
 She left the royal hounds mid-way,
 And dashing on the antler'd prey,
 Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
 And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
 The King's stout huntsman saw the
 sport

By strange intruder broken short,
 Came up, and with his leash un-
 bound,

In anger struck the noble hound.
 —The Douglas had endured, that
 morn,

The King's cold look, the nobles'
 scorn,

And last, and worst to spirit proud,
 Had borne the pity of the crowd;
 But Lufra had been fondly bred,
 To share his board, to watch his bed,
 And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
 In maiden glee with garlands deck;
 They were such playmates, that with
 name

Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
 In darken'd brow and flashing eye:
 As waves before the bark divide,
 The crowd gave way before his stride;
 Needs but a buffet and no more,
 The groom lies senseless in his gore.
 Such blow no other hand could deal,
 Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamour'd loud the royal train,
 And brandish'd swords and staves
 amain.

But stern the Baron's warning—
 "Back!

Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!

Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! the Douglas, doom'd
of old,

And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his
friends.”—

“Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!” the monarch
said;

“Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the
man,

The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow, and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward,—
Break off the sports!”—for tumult
rose,

And yeomen 'gan to bend their
bows,—

“Break off the sports!” he said, and
frown'd,

“And bid our horsemen clear the
ground.”

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen prick'd among the
crowd

Repell'd by threats and insults loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff,
with bar,

The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep;
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.

With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said,—

“Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my
blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder
laid;

For that good deed, permit me then
A word with these misguided men.

XXVIII.

“Hear, gentle friends! ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honour, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire!
Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind,
Which knit my country and my kind?
Oh no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should
dread,

For me in kindred gore are red;
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me, that mother wails her son;
For me, that widow's mate expires;
For me, that orphans weep their sires:
That patriots mourn insulted laws;
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!”

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they
pray'd

For blessings on his generous head,
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men, upon the verge of life,
Bless'd him who staid the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire:
Even the rough soldier's heart was
moved;

As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping
head,

The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge
With sighs resign'd his honour'd
charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling
heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his
train.

"O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common
fool?

Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud ac-
claim,

With which they shout the Douglas'
name!

With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
Strain'd for King James their morn-
ing note;

With like acclaim they hail'd the day
When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas
greet,

If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to
reign,

Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fever'd blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king!

XXXI.

"But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of
Mar?"

"He prays, my liege, your sports
keep bound

Within the safe and guarded ground:
For some foul purpose yet un-
known,—

Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlaw'd Chieftain, Roderick
Dhu,

Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand array'd.

The Earl of Mar, this morn, from
Doune,

To break their muster march'd, and
soon

Your grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not
ride."—

XXXII.

"Thou warn'st me I have done
amiss,—

I should have earlier look'd to this:
I lost it in this bustling day.

—Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,

The best of mine shall be thy meed.

Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,

We do forbid the intended war;

Roderick, this morn, in single fight,

Was made our prisoner by a knight;

And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.

The tidings of their leaders lost

Will soon dissolve the mountain host,

Nor would we that the vulgar feel,

For their Chief's crimes, avenging
steel.

Bear Mar out message, Braco: fly!"—
He turn'd his steed,—“My liege, I
hie.—

Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.”

The turf the flying courser spurn'd,
And to his towers the King return'd.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James's mood that day,
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismiss'd the courtly
throng,

And soon cut short the festal song.

Nor less upon the sadden'd town

The evening sunk in sorrow down.

The burghers spoke of civil jar,

Of rumour'd feuds and mountain war,

Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,

All up in arms:—the Douglas too,

They mourn'd him pent within the
hold,

“Where stout Earl William was of
old”*—

* He had been stabbed by James II. in
Stirling Castle.

And there his word the speaker staid,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 Or pointed to his dagger blade.
 But jaded horsemen, from the west,
 At evening to the Castle press'd;
 And busy talkers said they bore
 Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
 At noon the deadly fray begun,
 And lasted till the set of sun.
 Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
 Till closed the Night her pennons
 brown.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Guard-Room.

I.

THE sun, awakening, through the
 smoky air
 Of the dark city casts a sullen
 glance,
 Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
 Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
 Summoning revellers from the lag-
 ging dance,
 Scaring the prowling robber to his
 den;
 Gilding on battied tower the warder's
 lance,
 And warning student pale to leave
 his pen,
 And yield his drowsy eyes to the
 kind nurse of men.
 What various scenes, and, O! what
 scenes of woe,
 Are witness'd by that red and
 struggling beam!
 The fever'd patient, from his pallet
 low,
 Through crowded hospital beholds
 it stream;
 The ruin'd maiden trembles at its
 gleam,
 The debtor wakes to thought of
 gyve and jail,
 The love-lorn wretch starts from tor-
 menting dream;
 The wakful mother, by the glim-
 mering pale,
 Trims her sick infant's couch, and
 soothes his feeble wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
 With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
 While drums, with rolling note, fore-
 tell
 Relief to weary sentinel.
 Through narrow loop and casement
 barr'd,
 The sunbeams sought the Court of
 Guard,
 And, struggling with the smoky air,
 Deaden'd the torches' yellow glare.
 In comfortless alliance shone
 The lights through arch of blacken'd
 stone,
 And show'd wild shapes in garb of
 war,
 Faces deform'd with beard and scar,
 All haggard from the midnight watch,
 And fever'd with the stern debauch;
 For the oak table's massive board,
 Flooded with wine, with fragments
 stored,
 And beakers drain'd, and cups o'er-
 thrown,
 Show'd in what sport the night had
 flown.
 Some, weary, snored on floor and
 bench,
 Some labour'd still their thirst to
 quench;
 Some, chill'd with watching, spread
 their hands
 O'er the huge chimney's dying
 brands,
 While round them, or beside them
 flung,
 At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the
 sword,
 Like tenants of a feudal lord,
 Nor own'd the patriarchal claim
 Of chieftain in their leader's name;
 Adventurers they, from far who
 roved,
 To live by battle which they loved.
 There the Italian's clouded face,
 The swarthy Spaniard's there you
 trace;
 The mountain-loving Switzer there

More freely breathed in mountain-air;

The Fleming there despised the soil,
That paid so ill the labourer's toil;
Their rolls show'd French and German names;

And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-conceal'd disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well train'd to wield

The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontrol'd;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray,

Fierce was their speech, and, 'mid their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;

Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear

Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,

Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,

Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;

Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—

At length up-started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,

In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,

But still the boldest of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.

He grieved, that day, their games cut short,

And marr'd the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!

And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,

Like brethren of the brand and spear."

V.

Soldier's Song.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter
and Poule

Laid a swinging long curse on the
bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the
bonny black-jack,

And the seven deadly sins in a flagon
of sack;

Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy
liquor,

Drink upsees* out, and a fig for the
vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's
dear lip,

Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her
kerchief so sly,

And Apollyon shoots darts from her
merry black eye.

Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the
quicker,

Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig
for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why
should he not?

For the dues of his cure are the
placket and pot;

And 'tis right of his office poor lay-
men to lurch,

Who infringe the domains of our
good Mother Church.

Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your
liquor,

Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig
for the vicar!

VI.

The warder's challenge, heard with-
out,

Staid in mid-roar the merry shou

A soldier to the portal went,—

"Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And,—beat for jubilee the drum!

A maid and minstrel with him come."

Bertram, a Fleming, grey and scarr'd,

Was entering now the Court of Guard,

A harper with him, and in plaid

* A Dutch health, or drinking word.

All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrunk to 'scape the
view

Of the loose scene and boisterous
crew.

"What news?" they roar'd:—"I only
know,

From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untameable

As the rude mountains where they
dwell;

On both sides store of blood is lost,
Nor much success can either boast."—

"But whence thy captives, friend?
such spoil

As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow
sharp;

Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band."—

VII.

"No, comrade;—no such fortune
mine,

After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,

And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them
steed,

And bring them hitherward with
speed,

Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
Nor none shall do them shame and
harm."—

"Hear ye his boast?" cried John of
Brent,

Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our
lodge,

And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?

I'll have my share, how'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."

Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning with his vengeful
mood,

Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;

But Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
And dropp'd at once the tartan
screen:—

So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May, through summer
tears.

The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;

Even hardy Brent, abash'd and
tamed,

Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

Boldly she spoke,—“Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend;

Cheer'd him in camps, in marches
led,

And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant, or the strong,

Should exile's daughter suffer
wrong."—

Answer'd De Brent, most forward
still

In every feat or good or ill,—
“I shame me of the part I play'd:

And thou an outlaw's child, poor
maid!

An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the
cause.

Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,"—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,—

“Must bear such age, I think, as
thou.—

Hear ye, my mates; I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:

There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,

To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!—

Deware loose speech, or jesting rough:
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.”

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young.
(Of Tullibardine's house he sprung),

Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humour light,

And, though by courtesy controll'd,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.

The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look

And dauntless eye;—and yet, in
sooth,

Young Lewis was a generous youth;

But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
 Ill suited to the garb and scene,
 Might lightly bear construction
 strange,
 And give loose fancy scope to range.
 "Welcome to Stirling towers, fair
 maid!

Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
 On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
 Like errant damosel of yore?
 Does thy high quest a knight require,
 Or may the venture suit a squire?"—
 Her dark eye flash'd;—she paused
 and sigh'd,—
 "O what have I to do with pride!—
 Through scenes of sorrow, shame,
 and strife,
 A suppliant for a father's life,
 I crave an audience of the King.
 Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
 The royal pledge of grateful claims,
 Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

X.

The signet-ring young Lewis took,
 With deep respect and alter'd look;
 And said,—“This ring our duties
 own;
 And pardon, if to worth unknown,
 In semblance mean obscurely veil'd,
 Lady, in aught my folly fail'd.
 Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
 The King shall know what suitor
 waits.
 Please you, meanwhile, in fitting
 bower
 Repose you till his waking hour;
 Female attendance shall obey
 Your hest, for service or array.
 Permit I marshall you the way.”
 But, ere she followed, with the grace
 And open bounty of her race,
 She bade her slender purse be shared
 Among the soldiers of the guard.
 The rest with thanks their guerdon
 took;
 But Brent, with shy and awkward
 look,
 On the reluctant maiden's hold
 Forced bluntly back the proffer'd
 gold;—
 “Forgive a haughty English heart,

And O forget its ruder part!
 The vacant purse shall be my share,
 Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
 Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
 Where gayer crests may keep afar.”
 With thanks—'twas all she could—the
 maid
 His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
 Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
 “My lady safe, O let your grace
 Give me to see my master's face!
 His minstrel I,—to share his doom
 Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
 Tenth in descent, since first my sires
 Waked for his noble house their
 lyres,
 Nor one of all the race was known
 But prized its weal above their own.
 With the Chief's birth begins our
 care;
 Our harp must soothe the infant
 heir,
 Teach the youth tales of fight, and
 grace
 His earliest feat of field or chase;
 In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
 We cheer his board, we soothe his
 sleep,
 Nor leave him till we pour our verse—
 A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
 Then let me share his captive lot;
 It is my right—deny it not!”—
 “Little we reck,” said John of Brent,
 “We Southern men, of long descent;
 Nor wot we how a name—a word—
 Wakes clansmen vassa's to a lord:
 Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
 God bless the house of Beaudesert!
 And, but I loved to drive the deer,
 More than to guide the labouring
 steer,
 I had not dwelt an outcast here.
 Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
 Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou
 see.”

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
 A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
 Lighted a torch, and Allan led

Through grated arch and passage
dread.

Portals they pass'd, where, deep
within,

Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters'
din;

Through rugged vaults, where, loose-
ly stored,

Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's
sword,

And many an hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing
limb,

By artist form'd, who deem'd it
shame

And sin to give their work a name.

They halted at a low-brow'd porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward
roll'd,

And made the bar unhasp its hold.

They enter'd :—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,

Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,

And rude and antique garniture
Deck'd the sad walls and oaken floor;

Such as the rugged days of old
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.

"Here," said De Brent, "thou may'st
remain

Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,

To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then, the bolt he drew,

And the lock's murmurs growl'd
anew.

Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;

The wondering Minstrel look'd, and
knew—

Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu !
For, come from where Clan-Alpine

fought,
They, erring, deem'd the Chief he
sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,

Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies asunder,—

So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu !
And oft his fever'd limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shako her frame with ceaseless
beat,

Yet cannot heave her from her seat;—
O ! how unlike her course at sea !

Or his free step on hill and lea !—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,

"What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all !
Have they been ruin'd in my fall ?

Ah, yes ! or wherefore art thou here ?
Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not
fear."—

(For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror
too.)—

"Who fought—who fled?—Old man,
be brief;—

Some might—for they had lost their
Chief.

Who basely live?—who bravely died?"
"O calm thee, Chief !" the Minstrel

cried,
"Ellen is safe;"—"For that, thank
Heaven !"—

'And hopes are for the Douglas
given;—

The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,

Has never harp of minstrel told,
Of combat fought so true and bold.

Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is
rent."

XIV.

The Chieftain rear'd his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;

But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Chequer'd his swarthy brow and
cheeks.

—"Hark, Minstrel ! I have heard thee
play,

With measure bold, on festal day,
In yon lone isle, . . . again where

ne'er
Shall harper play, or warrior hear ! . . .

That stirring air that peels on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory. —

Strike it!—and then, (for well thou
canst,)

Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of
spears!

These grates, these walls, shall vanish
then,

For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soar'd from battle fray."
The trembling Bard with awe obey'd,
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witness'd from the mountain's
height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awaken'd the full power of song,
And bore him in career alone;—
As shallop launch'd on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's
beam.

XV.

Battle of Beal an Duine.

"The Minstrel came once more to
view

The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For, ere he parted, he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!

There is no breeze upon the fern,
Nor ripple on the lake,

Upon her eery nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;

The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,

So darkly glooms yon thunder
cloud,

That swathes, as with a purple
shroud,

Benledi's distant hill.

Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Orechoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?

Is it the lightning's quivering
glance

That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?

—I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero bound for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peacefullife,
One glance at their array!

XVI.

'Their light-arm'd archers far and
near

Survey'd the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and
spear,

A twilight forest frown'd,
Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crown'd.

No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;

Save heavy tread, and armour's
clang,

The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests
to shake,

Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarcely the frail aspen seem'd to
quake,

That shadow'd o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings
bring,

Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stir'd the roe;

The host moves like a deep-sea
wave,

Where rise no rocks its pride to
brave,

High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,

Before the Trosach's rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen
pause,

While to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-
men.

XVII.

"At once there rose so wild a yell
 Within that dark and narrow dell,
 As all the fiends, from heaven that
 fell,
 Had peeld the banner-cry of hell!
 Forth from the pass in tumult
 driven,
 Like chaff before the wind of hea-
 ven,
 The archery appear.
 For life! for life! their plight they
 ply—
 And suriek, and shout, and battle-
 cry,
 And plaids and bonnets waving
 high,
 And broadswords flashing to the
 sky,
 Are maddening in the rear.
 Onward they drive, in dreadful
 race,
 Pursuers and pursued;
 Before that tide of flight and chase,
 How shall it keep its rooted place,
 The spearmen's twilight wood?—
 'Down! down!' cried Mar, 'your
 lances down!
 Bear back both friend and foe!—
 Like reeds before the tempest's
 frown,
 That seried grove of lances brown
 At once lay level! low;
 And closely shouldering side by
 side,
 The bristling ranks the onset
 bide.—
 'We'll quell the savage moun-
 taineer,
 As their Tinchel* crows the game!
 They come as fleet as forest deer,
 We'll drive them back as tame.'—

XVIII.

"Bearing before them, in their course,
 The relics of the archer force,
 Like wave with crest of sparkling
 foam,

* A circle of sportsmen, who, by surround-
 ing a great space, and gradually narrowin-
 g, brought immense quantities of deer together,
 which usually made desperate efforts to break
 through the *Tinchel*.

Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
 Above the tide, each broadsword
 bright
 Was brandishing like beam of
 light,
 Each targe was dark below;
 And with the ocean's mighty swing,
 When heaving to the tempest's
 wing,
 They hurl'd them on the foe.
 I heard the lance's shivering crash,
 As when the whirlwind rends the
 ash.
 I heard the broadsword's deadly
 clang,
 As if an hundred anvil's rang!
 But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
 Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
 —'My banner-man, advance!
 I see,' he cried, 'their column
 shake.—
 Now, gallants! for your ladies'
 sake,
 Upon them with the lance!—
 The horsemen dash'd among the
 rout,
 As deer break through the broom;
 Their steeds are stout, their swords
 are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
 Clan-Alpine's best are backward
 borne—
 Where, where was Roderick
 then!
 One blast upon his bugle horn
 Were worth a thousand men!
 And refluent through the pass of
 fear
 The battle's tide was pour'd;
 Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling
 spear,
 Vanish'd the mountain-sword.
 As Bracklinn's chasm, so black an l
 steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
 As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in,
 So did the deep and darksome pass
 Devour the battle's mingled mass:
 None linger now upon the plain,
 Save those who ne'er shall fight
 again.

XIX.

“Now westward rolls the battle’s din,
That deep and doubling pass within,
—Minstrel, away, the work of fate
Is bearing on : its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosach’s dread
defile

Opens on Katrine’s lake and isle.—
Grey Benvenue I soon repass’d,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.

The sun is set ;—the clouds are
met,

The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky view of vivid blue

To the deep lake has given ;
Strange gusts of wind from moun-
tain-glen

Swept o’er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosach’s gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the
ground,

And spoke the stern and desperate
strife

That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,

But not in mingled tide ;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side ;

While by the lake below appears
The dark’ning cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shatter’d band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand ;
Their banners stream like tatter’d
sail,

That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Mark’d the fell havoc of the day.

XX.

“Viewing the mountain’s ridge ask-
ance,

The Saxon stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—‘Behold yon isle !—
See ! none are left to guard its strand,

But women weak, that wring the
hand :

’Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty went to pile ;
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o’er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we’ll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and
den.’

Forth from the ranks a spearman
sprung,

On earth his casque and corslet
rung,

He plunged him in the wave :—
All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue
A mingled echo gave ;

The Saxons shout, their mate to
cheer.

The helpless females scream for
fear,

And yells for rage the mountainter.

’Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Pour’d down at once the lowering
heaven ;

A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine’s
breast,

Her billows rear’d their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swell’d they
high,

To mar the Highland marksman’s
eye ;

For round him shower’d, ’mid rain
and hail,

The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—

In vain—He nears the isle—and lo !

His hand is on a shallop’s bow.

—Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with
flame ;—

I mark’d Duncraggan’s widow’d
dame,

Behind an oak I saw her stand,

A naked dirk gleam’d in her hand :

It darken’d,—but amid the moan

Of waves, I heard a dying groan ;

Another flash !—the spearman floats

A weltering corse beside the boats,

And the stern matron o’er him stood,

Her hand and dagger streaming
blood.

XXI.

" 'Revenge! revenge!' the Saxons
 cried,
 The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
 Despite the elemental rage,
 Again they hurried to engage;
 But, ere they closed in desperate
 fight,
 Bloody with spurring came a knight,
 Sprung from his horse, and, from a
 crag,
 Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white
 flag.
 Clarion and trumpet by his side
 Rung forth a truce-note high and
 wide,
 While, in the Monarch's name, afar
 An herald's voice forbade the war,
 For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick
 bold,
 Were both, he said, in captive hold."
 —But here the lay made sudden
 stand!—
 The harp escaped the Minstrel's
 hand!—
 Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
 How Roderick brook'd his minstrelsy:
 At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
 With lifted hand kept feeble time;
 That motion ceased,—yet feeling
 strong,
 Varied his look as changed the song;
 At length, no more his deafen'd ear
 The minstrel melody can hear;
 His face grows sharp,—his hands are
 clench'd,
 As if some pang his heart-strings
 wrench'd;
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye
 Is sternly fix'd on vacancy;
 Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
 His parting breath, stout Roderick
 Dhu!—
 Old Allan Bane look'd on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit pass'd:
 But when he saw that life was fled,
 He pour'd his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

Lament.

"And art thou cold and lowly laid,
 Thy foemen's dread, thy people's aid,

Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's
 shade!
 For thee shall none a requiem say?
 —For thee,—who loved the minstrel's
 lay,
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the
 stay,
 The shelter of her exiled line,
 E'en in this prison-house of thine,
 I'll wail for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"What groans shall yonder valleys
 fill!
 What shrieks of grief shall rend yon
 hill!
 What tears of burning rage shall
 thrill,
 When mourns thy tribe thy battles
 done,
 Thy fall before the race was won,
 Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
 There breathes not clansman of thy
 line,
 But would have given his life for
 thine.—
 O woe for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
 The captive thrush may brook the
 cage,
 The prison'd eagle dies for rage.
 Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
 And, when its notes awake again,
 Even she, so long beloved in vain,
 Shall with my harp her voice com-
 bine,
 And mix her woe and tears with
 mine,
 To wail Clan-Alpine's honour'd Pine."

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
 Remain'd in lordly bower apart,
 Where play'd with many-colour'd
 gleams,
 Through storied pane the rising
 beams.
 In vain on gilded roof they fall,
 And lighten'd up a tapestried wall,
 And for her use a menial train
 A rich collation spread in vain.
 The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
 Scarce drew one curious glance astray;

Or, if she look'd, 'twas but to say,
 With better omen dawn'd the day
 In that lone isle, where waded on high
 The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
 Where oft her noble father shared
 The simple meal her care prepared,
 While Lufra, crouching by her side,
 Her station claim'd with jealous pride,
 And Douglas, bent on woodland
 game,
 Spoils of the chase to Malcolm
 Græme,
 Whose answer, oft at random made,
 The wandering of his thoughts be-
 tray'd.—

Those who such simple joys have
 known,
 Are taught to prize them when they're
 gone.

But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
 The window seeks with cautious tread.
 What distant music has the power
 To win her in this woful hour!
 'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
 Her latticed bower, the strain was
 sung.

XXIV.

Lay of the Imprisoned Huntsman.

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
 My idle greyhound loathes his food,
 My horse is weary of his stall,
 And I am sick of captive thrall.

I wish I were, as I have been,
 Hunting the hart in forest green,
 With bended bow and bloodhound
 free,

For that's the life is meet for me.
 I hate to learn the ebb of time,
 From yon dull steeple's drowsy
 chime,

Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
 Inch after inch along the wall.
 The lark was wont my matins ring,
 The sable rook my vespers sing,
 These towers, although a king's they
 be,

Have not a hall of joy for me.
 No more at dawning morn I rise,
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,

And homeward wend with evening
 dew;
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
 And lay my trophies at her feet,
 While fled the eye on wing of glee,—
 That life is lost to love and me!"

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
 The list'ner had not turned her head,
 It trickled still, the starting tear,
 When light a footstep struck her ear,
 And Snowdown's graceful knight was
 near.

She turn'd the hastier, lest again
 The prisoner should renew his
 strain.—

"O welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she
 said;

"How may an almost orphan maid
 Pay the deep debt."—"O say not so!
 To me no gratitude you owe.

Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
 And bid thy noble father live;
 I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
 With Scotland's king thy suit to aid.
 No tyrant he, though ire and pride
 May lay his better mood aside.

Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than
 time,

He holds his court at morning prime."
 With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
 As to a brother's arm she clung.

Gently he dried the falling tear,
 And gently whisper'd hope and cheer;
 Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
 Through gallery fair, and high arcade,
 Till, at its touch, its wings of pride
 A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
 A thronging scene of figures bright;
 It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
 As when the setting sun has given
 Ten thousand hues to summer even,
 And from their tissue, fancy frames
 Aërial knights and fairy dames.

Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
 A few faint steps she forward made,
 Then slow her drooping head she
 raised,

And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought, who own'd this
state,
The dreaded prince whose will was
fate.

She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,
Then turn'd bewild'rd and amazed,
For all stood bare; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent;
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks, and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring.
And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's
King.

XXVII.

As wreath of snow, on mountain-
breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking breast com-
mands,—
She show'd the ring, she clasp'd her
hands.
O! not a moment could he brook,
The generous prince, that suppliant
look!
Gently he raised her; and, the while
Check'd with a glance the circle's
smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he
kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—
“Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-
James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask nought for Douglas; yester even,
His prince and he have much for-
given.
Wrong hath he had from slanderous
tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsman, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamour
loud;

Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided, and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud
stern,
With stout De Vaux and Grey Glen-
cairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we
own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine
aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting
maid.”

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest, draught of
Power,—
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On Nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepp'd between—“Nay, Doug-
las, nay,
Steel not any proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to
speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under flame which veils my
power,
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,
And Normans call me James Fitz-
James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured
cause.”—
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
“Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter
thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Join'd to thine eye's dark witchcraft,
drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave

Thy Monarch's life to mountain
 glaive!"—
 Aloud he spoke—"Thou still dost
 hold
 That little talisman of gold,
 Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden
 guess'd
 He probed the weakness of her breast;
 But, with that consciousness, there
 came
 A lightening of her fears for Græme,
 And more she deem'd the Monarch's
 ire
 Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire,
 Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
 And, to her generous feeling true,
 She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
 "Forbear thy suit:—the King of
 Kings
 Alone can stay life's parting wings,
 I know his heart, I know his hand,
 Have shared his cheer, and proved
 his brand;—
 My fairest earldom would I give
 To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!
 Hast thou no other boon to crave?
 No other captive friend to save?"
 Blushing, she turn'd her from the
 King,
 And to the Douglas gave the ring,
 As if she wish'd her sire to speak
 The suit that stain'd her glowing
 cheek.—
 "Nay, then, my pledge has lost its
 force,
 And stubborn justice holds her
 course.—
 Malcolm, come forth!"—And, at the
 word,
 Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's
 Lord.
 "For thee, rash youth, no suppliant
 succs,
 From thee may Vengeance claim her
 dues,
 Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
 Has paid our care by treacherous
 wile,

And sought amid thy faithful clan,
 A refuge for an outlaw'd man,
 Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
 Fetters and warder for the Græme!"—
 His chain of gold the King unstrung,
 The links o'er Malcolm's neck he
 flung,
 Then gently drew the glittering band,
 And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The
 hills grow dark,
 On purple peaks a deeper shade
 descending;
 In twilight cope the glow-worm
 lights her spark,
 The deer, half-seen, are to the cov-
 ert wending.
 Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain
 lending,
 And the wild breeze, thy wilder
 minstrelsy;
 Thy numbers sweet with nature's
 vespers blending,
 With distant echo from the fold
 and lea,
 And herd-boy's evening pipe, and
 hum of housing bee.
 Yet, once again, farewell, thou Min-
 strel harp!
 Yet, once again, forgive my feeble
 sway,
 And little reck I of the censure sharp
 May idly cavil at an idle lay.
 Much have I owed thy strains on life's
 long way,
 Through secret woes the world has
 never known,
 When on the weary night dawn'd
 wearier day,
 And bitterer was the grief devour'd
 alone.
 That I o'erlive such woes, Enchant-
 ress, is thine own.
 Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow
 retire,
 Some Spirit of the Air has wak'd
 thy string!
 'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch
 of fire,

'Tis now the bush of Fairy's frolic wing.
 Receding now, the dying numbers ring
 Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,

And now the mountain breeze scarcely bring
 A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
 And now, 'tissilent all!—Enchantress,
 fare thee well!

THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

Lives there a strain, whose sounds
 of mounting fire
 May rise distinguish'd o'er the
 din of war;
 Or died it with you, Master of the
 Lyre,
 Who sung beleaguer'd Ilion's evil
 star?
 Such, WELLINGTON, might reach
 thee from afar,
 Wafting its descant wide o'er
 Ocean's range;
 Nor shouts, nor clashing arms, its
 mood could mar,
 All as it swell'd 'twixt each loud
 trumpet charge,
 That clangs to Britain victory, to
 Portugal revenge!

II.

Yes! such a strain, with all o'er-
 pouring measure,
 Might melodize with each tumultu-
 ous sound,
 Each voice of fear or triumph, woe
 or pleasure,
 That rings Mondego's ravaged
 shores around;
 The thundering cry of hosts with
 conquest crown'd,
 The female shriek, the ruin'd
 peasant's moan,
 The shout of captives from their
 chains unbound,
 The foil'd oppressor's deep and
 sullen groan,
 A Nation's choral hymn for tyranny
 o'erthrown.

III.

But we, weak minstrels of a laggard
 day,
 Skill'd but to imitate an elder
 page,
 Timid and raptureless, can we re-
 pay
 The debt thou claim'st in this
 exhausted age?
 Thou givest our lyres a theme, that
 might engage
 Those that could send thy name
 o'er sea and land,
 While sea and land shall last; for
 Homer's rage
 A theme; a theme for Milton's
 mighty hand—
 How much unmeet for us, a faint de-
 generate band!

IV.

Ye mountains stern! within whose
 rugged breast
 The friends of Scottish freedom
 found repose;
 Ye torrents! whose hoarse sounds
 have soothed their rest,
 Returning from the field of van-
 quish'd foes;
 Say have ye lost each wild majestic
 close,
 That erst the choir of Bards or
 Druids flung;
 What time their hymn of victory
 arose,
 And Cattrath's glens with voice
 of triumph rung,
 And mystic Merlin harp'd, and grey-
 hair'd Llywarch sung!

V.

O! if your wilds such minstrelsy
 retain,
 As sure your changeful gales
 seem oft to say,
 When sweeping wild and sinking
 soft again,
 Like trumpet-jubilee, or harp's
 wild sway;
 If ye can echo such triumphant
 lay,
 Then lend the note to him has
 loved you long!
 Who pious gather'd each tradition
 grey,
 That floats your solitary wastes
 along,
 And with affection vain gave them
 new voice and song.

VI.

For not till now, how oft so'er the
 task
 Of truant verse hath lighten'd
 graver care,
 From Muse or Sylvan was he wont
 to ask,
 In phrase poetic, inspiration fair;
 Careless he gave his numbers to
 the air,
 They came unsought for, if ap-
 plauses came;
 Nor for himself prefers he now the
 prayer;
 Let but his verse besit a hero's
 fame,
 Immortal be the verse!—forgot the
 poet's name.

VII.

Hark, from yon misty cairn their
 answer tost:
 "Minstrel! the fame of whose
 romantic lyre,
 Capricious-swelling now, may soon
 be lost,
 Like the light flickering of a cot-
 tage fire;
 If to such task presumptuous thou
 aspire,
 Seek not from us the meed to
 warrior due:

Age after age hath gathered son to
 sire,
 Since our grey cliffs the din of
 conflict knew,
 Or, peeling through our vales, victo-
 rious bugles blew.

VIII.

"Decay'd our old traditionary lore,
 Save where the lingering fays re-
 new their ring,
 By milk-maid seen beneath the
 hawthorn hoar,
 Or round the marge of Minch-
 more's haunted spring:
 Save where their legends grey-
 hair'd shepherds sing,
 That now scarce win a listening
 ear but thine,
 Of feuds obscure, and Border rav-
 aging,
 And rugged deeds recount in
 rugged line,
 Of moonlight foray made on Teviot,
 Tweed, or Tyne.

IX.

"No! search romantic lands, where
 the near Sun
 Gives with unstinted boon ethe-
 real flame,
 Where the rude villager, his labour
 done,
 In verse spontaneous chants some
 favour'd name.
 Whether Olalia's charms his trib-
 ute claim,
 Her eye of diamond, and her
 locks of jet;
 Or whether, kindling at the deeds
 of Græme,
 He sing, to wild Morisco meas-
 ure set,
 Old Albin's red claymore, green
 Erin's bayonet!

X.

"Explore those regions, where
 the flinty crest
 Of wild Nevada ever gleams with
 snows,

Where in the proud Alhambra's
 ruin'd breast
 Barbaric monuments of pomp re-
 pose ;
 Or where the banners of more ruth-
 less foes
 Than the fierce Moor, float o'er
 Toledo's fane,
 From whose tall towers even now
 the patriot throws
 An anxious glance, to spy upon
 the plain
 The blended ranks of England, Por-
 tugal, and Spain.

XI.

"There, of Numantian fire a swar-
 thy spark
 Still lightens in the sun-burnt
 native's eye ;
 The stately port, slow step, and
 visage dark,
 Still mark enduring pride and
 constancy.
 And, if the glow of feudal chivalry
 Beam not, as once, thy nobles'
 dearest pride,
 Iberia ! oft thy crestless peasantry
 Have seen the plumed Hidalgo
 quit their side,
 Have seen, yet dauntless stood—
 'gainst fortune fought and died.

XII.

"And cherish'd still by that un-
 changing race,
 Are themes for minstrelsy more
 high than thine ;
 Of strange tradition many a mystic
 trace,
 Legend and vision, prophecy and
 sign ;
 Where wonders wide of Arabesque
 combine
 With Gothic imagery of darker
 shade,
 Forming a model meet for minstrel
 line.
 Go, seek such theme !" —The
 Mountain Spirit said :
 With filial awe I heard—I heard, and
 I obey'd.

I.

REARING their crests amid the
 cloudless skies,
 And darkly clustering in the pale
 moonlight,
 Toledo's holy towers and spires
 arise,
 As from a trembling lake of
 silver white.
 Their mingled shadows intercept
 the sight
 Of the broad burial-ground out-
 stretch'd below,
 And nought disturbs the silence of
 the night ;
 All sleeps in sullen shade, or
 silver glow,
 All save the heavy swell of Teio's
 ceaseless flow.

II.

All save the rushing swell of Teio's
 tide,
 Or, distant heard, a courser's
 neigh or tramp ;
 Their changing rounds as watchful
 horsemen ride,
 To guard the limits of King
 Roderick's camp.
 For, through the river's night-fog
 rolling damp,
 Was many a proud pavilion
 dimly seen,
 Which glimmer'd back against the
 moon's fair lamp,
 Tissues of silk and silver twisted
 sheen,
 And standards proudly pitch'd, and
 warders arm'd between.

III.

But of their Monarch's person
 keeping ward,
 Since last the deep-mouth'd bell
 of vespers toll'd,
 The chosen soldiers of the royal
 guard
 The post beneath the proud Ca-
 thedral hold ;
 A band unlike their Gothic sires of
 old,

Who, for the cap of steel and
 iron mace,
 Bear slender darts, and casques be-
 deck'd with gold,
 While silver-studded belts their
 shoulders grace,
 Where ivory quivers ring in the broad
 falchion's place.

IV.

In the light language of an idle
 court,
 They murmur'd at their master's
 long delay,
 And held his lengthen'd orisons in
 sport:—
 "What! will Don Roderick here
 till morning stay,
 To wear in shrift and prayer the
 night away?
 And are his hours in such dull
 penance past,
 For fair Florinda's plunder'd
 charms to pay?"—
 Then to the east their weary eyes
 they cast,
 And wish'd the lingering dawn would
 glimmer forth at last.

V.

But, far within, Toledo's Prelate lent
 An ear of fearful wonder to the
 King;
 The silver lamp a fitful lustre sent,
 So long that sad confession wit-
 nessing:
 For Roderick told of many a hid-
 den thing,
 Such as are lothly utter'd to the
 air.
 When Fear, Remorse, and Shame,
 the bosom wring,
 And Guilt his secret burden can-
 not bear,
 And Conscience seeks in speech a
 respite from despair.

VI.

Full on the Prelate's face, and sil-
 ver hair,
 The stream of failing light was
 feebly roll'd:

But Roderick's visage, though his
 head was bare,
 Was shadow'd by his hand and
 mantle's fold.
 While of his hidden soul the sins
 he told,
 Proud Alaric's descendant could
 not brook,
 That mortal man his bearing should
 behold,
 Or boast that he had seen, when
 Conscience shook,
 Fear tame a monarch's brow, Re-
 morse a warrior's look.

VII.

The old man's faded cheek wax'd yet
 more pale,
 As many a secret sad the King be-
 wray'd;
 As sign and glance eked out the un-
 finished tale,
 When in the midst his faltering
 whisper staid.—
 "Thus royal Witiza* was slain,"—he
 said,
 "Yet, holy Father, deem not it
 was I."
 Thus still Ambition strives her
 crimes to shade.—
 "Oh! rather deem it 'twas stern
 necessity!
 Self-preservation bade, and I must
 kill or die.

VIII.

"And if Florinda's shrieks alarm'd
 the air,
 If she invoked her absent sire in
 vain,
 And on her knees implored that I
 would spare,
 Yet, reverend priest, thy sentence
 rash refrain!—
 All is not as it seems—the female
 train
 Know by their bearing to dis-
 guise their mood:"—
 But Conscience here, as if in high
 disdain,

* Witiza was Roderick's predecessor on
 the Spanish throne. He was slain by Rod-
 erick's connivance.

Sent to the Monarch's cheek the
blood—
He stay'd his speech abrupt—and up
the Prelate stood.

IX.

“O harden'd offspring of an iron
race!
What of thy crimes, Don Roder-
ick, shall I say?
What alms, or prayers, or penance
can efface
Murder's dark spot, wash trea-
son's stain away!
For the foul ravisher how shall I
pray,
Who, scarce repentant, makes
his crime his boast?
How hope Almighty vengeance
shall delay,
Unless in mercy to yon Christian
host,
He spare the shepherd, lest the guilt-
less sheep be lost.”

X.

Then kindled the dark Tyrant in
his mood,
And to his brow return'd its
dauntless gloom;
“And welcome then,” he cried, “be
blood for blood,
For treason treachery, for dishon-
our doom!
Yet will I know whence come they,
or by whom.
Show, for thou canst—give forth
the fated key,
And guide me, Priest, to that mys-
terious room,
Where, if aught true in old tradi-
tion be,
His nation's future fates a Spanish
King shall see.”—

XI.

“Ill-fated Prince! recall the des-
perate word,
Or pause ere yet the omen thou
obey?
Bethink, yon spell-bound portal
would afford

Never to former Monarch en-
trance-way;
Nor shall it ever ope, old records
say,
Save to a King, the last of all his
line,
What time his empire totters to
decay,
And treason digs, beneath, her
fatal mine,
And, high above, impends avenging
wrath divine.”—

XII.

“Prelate! a Monarch's fate brooks
no delay;
Lead on!”—The ponderous key
the old man took,
And held the winking lamp, and
led the way,
By winding stair, dark aisle,
and secret nook,
Then on an ancient gateway bent
his look;
And, as the key the desperate
King essay'd,
Low mutter'd thunders the Cath-
edral shook,
And twice he stopp'd, and twice
new effort made,
Till the huge bolts roll'd back, and
the loud hinges bray'd.

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty, was that
vaulted hall;
Roof, walls, and floor, were all of
marble stone,
Of polish'd marble, black as funer-
al pall,
Carved o'er with signs and char-
acters unknown.
A paly light, as of the dawning,
shone
Through the sad bounds, but
whence they could not spy;
For window to the upper air was
none;
Yet, by that light, Don Roderick
could descry
Wonders that ne'er till then were
seen by mortal eye.

XIV.

Grim sentinels, against the upper wall,
 Of molten bronze, two Statutes held their place;
 Massive their naked limbs, their stature tall,
 Their frowning foreheads golden circles grace.
 Moulded they seem'd for kings of giant race,
 That lived and sinn'd before the avenging flood;
 This grasp'd a scythe, that rested on a mace;
 This spread his wings for flight, that pondering stood,
 Each stubborn seem'd and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fix'd was the right-hand Giant's brazen look
 Upon his brother's glass of shifting sand,
 As if its ebb he measured by a book,
 Whose iron volume loaded his huge hand;
 In which was wrote of many a fallen land,
 Of empires lost, and kings to exile driven:
 And o'er that pair their name in scroll expand—
 "Lo, DESTINY and TIME! to whom by Heaven
 The guidance of the earth is for a season given."—

XVI.

Even while they read, the sand-glass wastes away;
 And, as the last and lagging grains did creep,
 That right-hand Giant 'gan his club upsway,
 As one that startles from a heavy sleep.
 Full on the upper wall the mace's sweep
 At once descended with the force of thunder,

And hurling down at once, in orumbled heap,
 The marble boundary was rent asunder,
 And gave to Roderick's view new sights of fear and wonder.

XVII.

For they might spy, beyond that mighty breach,
 Realms as of Spain in vision'd prospect laid,
 Castles and towers, in due proportion each,
 As by some skilful artist's hand portray'd.
 Here, crossed by many a wild Sierra's shade,
 And boundless plains that tire the traveller's eye;
 There, rich with vineyard and with olive glade,
 Or deep-embrown'd by forests huge and high,
 Or wash'd by mighty streams, that slowly murmur'd by.

XVIII.

And here, as erst upon the antique stage,
 Pass'd forth the band of masquers trimly led,
 In various forms, and various equipage,
 While fitting strains the hearer's fancy fed;
 So, to sad Roderick's eye in order spread,
 Successive pageants fill'd that mystic scene,
 Showing the fate of battles ere they bled,
 And issue of events that had not been;
 And, ever and anon, strange sounds were heard between.

XIX.

First shrill'd an unreported female shriek!—
 It seem'd as if Don Roderick knew the call,
 For the bold blood was blanching in his cheek,—

Then answer'd kettle-drum and
 atabal,
 Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the
 ear appal,
 The Tecbir war-cry, and the
 Lelie's yell,
 Ring wildly dissonant along the
 hall.
 Needs not to Roderick their
 dread import tell—
 "The Moor!" he cried, "The Moor!—
 ring out the Tocsin bell!

XX.

"They come! they come! I see the
 groaning lands
 White with the turbans of each
 Arab horde;
 Swart Zarah joins her misbeliev-
 ing bands,
 Alla and Mahomet their battle-
 word,
 The choice they yield, the Koran
 or the Sword—
 See how the Christians rush to
 arms amain!—
 In yonder shout the voice of con-
 flict roar'd,
 The shadowy hosts are closing
 on the plain—
 Now, God and Saint Iago strike, for
 the good cause of Spain!

XXI.

"By Heaven, the Moors prevail!
 the Christians yield!
 Their coward leader gives for
 flight the sign!
 The sceptred craven mounts to quit
 the field—
 Is not yon steed Orelia?—Yes,
 'tis mine!
 But never was she turn'd from bat-
 tle-line:
 Lo! where the recreant spurs
 o'er stock and stone!
 Curses pursue the slave, and wrath
 divine!
 Rivers ingulph him!"—"Hush,"
 in shuddering tone,
 The Prelate said;—"rash Prince, yon
 vision'd form's thine own."

XXII.

Just then, a torrent cross'd the
 fier's course;
 The dangerous ford the Kingly
 Likeness tried;
 But the deep eddies whelm'd both
 man and horse,
 Swept like benighted peasant
 down the tide;
 And the proud Moslemah spread
 far and wide,
 As numerous as their native
 locust band;
 Berber and Ismael's sons the spoils
 divide,
 With naked scimitars mete out
 the land,
 And for the bondsman base the free-
 born natives brand.

XXIII.

Then rose the grated Harem, to
 enclose
 The loveliest maidens of the
 Christian line;
 Then, menials, to their misbeliev-
 ing foes,
 Castile's young nobles held for-
 bidden wine;
 Then, too, the holy Cross, salva-
 tion's sign,
 By impious hands was from the
 altar thrown,
 And the deep aisles of the polluted
 shrine
 Echo'd, for holy hymn and organ-
 tone
 The Santon's frantic dance, the Fa-
 kir's gibbering moan.

XXIV.

How fares Don Roderick?—E'en
 as one who spies
 Flames dart their glare o'er mid-
 night's sable woof,
 And hears around his children's
 piercing cries,
 And sees the pale assistants stand
 aloof;
 While cruel Conscience brings him
 bitter proof,

His folly or his crime have caused
 his grief;
 And while above him nod the
 crumbling roof,
 He curses earth and Heaven—
 himself in chief—
 Desperate of earthly aid, despairing
 Heaven's relief!

XXV.

That scythe-arm'd Giant turn'd his
 fatal glass
 And twilight on the landscape
 closed her wings;
 Far to Asturian hills the war-
 sounds pass,
 And in their stead rebeck or tim-
 brel rings;
 And to the sound the bell-deck'd
 dancer springs,
 Bazaars resound as when their
 marts are met,
 In tourney light the Moor his
 jerrid* flings,
 And on the land as evening
 seem'd to set,
 The Imaum's chant was heard from
 mosque or minaret.

XXVI.

So pass'd that pageant. Ere an-
 other came,
 The visionary scene was wrapp'd
 in smoke,
 Whose sulph'rous wreaths were
 cross'd by sheets of flame;
 With every flash a bolt explo-
 sive broke,
 Till Roderick deem'd the fiends
 had burst their yoke,
 And waved 'gainst heaven the
 infernal gonfalone.†
 For War a new and dreadful lan-
 guage spoke,
 Never by ancient warrior heard
 or known;
 Lightning and smoke her breath, and
 thunder was her tone.

* *Jerrid*, javelin.† *Gonfalone*, banner.

XXVII.

From the dim landscape roll the
 clouds away—
 The Christians have regain'd
 their heritage;
 Before the Cross has waned the
 Crescent's ray
 And many a monastery decks the
 stage,
 And lofty church, and low-brow'd
 hermitage.
 The land obeys a Hermit and a
 Knight,—
 The Genii those of Spain for many
 an age;
 This clad in sackcloth, that in
 armour bright,
 And that was VALOUR named, this
 BIGOTRY was hight.

XXVIII.

VALOUR was harness'd like a Chief
 of old,
 Arm'd at all points, and prompt
 for knightly gest;
 His sword was temper'd in the
 Ebro cold,
 Morena's eagle plume adorn'd his
 crest,
 The spoils of Afric's lion bound his
 breast.
 Fierce he stepp'd forward and
 flung down his gage;
 As if of mortal kind to brave the
 best.
 Him follow'd his Companion,
 dark and sage,
 As he, my Master, sung the danger-
 ous Archimage.

XXIX.

Haughty of heart and brow the
 Warrior came,
 In look and language proud as
 proud might be,
 Vaunting his lordship, lineage,
 fights, and fame:
 Yet was that barefoot monk more
 proud than he:
 And as the ivy climbs the tallest
 tree,
 So round the loftiest soul his
 toils he wound,

And with his spells subdued the
fierce and free,
Till ermined Age and Youth in
arms renown'd,
Honouring his scourge and haircloth,
meekly kiss'd the ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that VALOUR,
peerless knight,
Who ne'er to King or Kaiser
veil'd his crest,
'Victorious still in bull-feast or in
fight,
Since first his limbs with mail
he did invest,
Stoop'd ever to that Anchoret's
behest ;
Nor reason'd of the right, nor of
the wrong,
But at his bidding laid the lance
in rest,
And wrought fell deeds the
troubled world along,
For he was fierce as brave, and piti-
less as strong.

XXXI.

Oft his proud galleys sought some
new-found world,
That latest sees the sun, or first
the morn ;
Still at the Wizard's feet their
spoils he hurl'd,—
Ingots of ore from rich Potosi
borne,
Crowns by Caciques,* aigrettes by
Omrahs worn,
Wrought of rare gems, but
broken, rent, and foul ;
Idols of gold from heathen temples
torn,
Bedabbled all with blood,—With
grisly scowl
The Hermit mark'd the stains, and
smiled beneath his cowl.

XXXII.

Then did he bless the offering, and
bade make
Tribute to Heaven of gratitude
and praise ;

* *Caciques and Omrahs*, Peruvian and Mexican chiefs or nobles.

And at his word the choral hymns
awake,
And many a hand the silver
censer sways,
But with the incense-breath these
censers raise,
Mix steams from corpses smoul-
dering in the fire ;
The groans of prison'd victims
mar the lays,
And shrieks of agony confound
the quire ;
While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the
darken'd scenes expire.

XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of
music heard,
As once again revolved that
measured sand ;
Such sounds as when, for sylvan
dance prepared,
Gay Xeres summons forth her
vintage band ;
When for the light bolero ready
stand
The mozo blithe, with gay mu-
chacha met,
He conscious of his broider'd cap
and band,
She of her netted locks and light
corsette,
Each tiptoe perch'd to spring, and
shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening
scene became ;
For VALOUR had relax'd his ar-
dent look,
And at a lady's feet, like lion tame,
Lay stretch'd, full loth the weight
of arms to brook ;
And soften'd BIGORRY, upon his
book,
Patter'd a task of little good or ill :
But the blithe peasant plied his
pruning-hook,
Whistled the muleteer o'er vale
and hill,
And rung from village-green the
merry seguidille.

XXXV.

Grey Royalty, grown impotent of
toil,
Let the grave sceptre slip his
kzy hold;
And, careless, saw his rule become
the spoil
Of a loose Female and her min-
ion bold.
But peace was on the cottage and
the fold,
From court intrigue, from bick-
ering faction far;
Beneath the chestnut-tree Love's
tale was told,
And to the tinkling of the light
guitar,
Sweet stoop'd the western sun, sweet
rose the evening star.

XXXVI.

As that sea-cloud, in size like hu-
man hand,
When first from Carmel by the
Tishbite* seen,
Came slowly overshadowing Israel's
land,
A while, perchance, bedeck'd
with colours sheen,
While yet the sunbeams on its
skirts had been,
Limning with purple and with
gold its shroud,
Till darker folds obscured the blue
serene,
And blotted heaven with one
broad sable cloud,
Then sheeted rain burst down, and
whirlwinds howl'd aloud:—

XXXVII.

Even so, upon that peaceful scene
was pour'd,
Like gathering clouds, full many
a foreign band,
And HE, their Leader, wore in sheath
his sword,
And offer'd peaceful front and
open hand,

* Ehjah the Prophet. See 1 Kings, chap.
xviii.

Veiling the perjured treachery he
plann'd,
By friendship's zeal and honour's
specious guise,
Until he won the passes of the land;
Then burst were honour's oath,
and friendship's ties!
He clutch'd his vulture-grasp, and
call'd fair Spain his prize.

XXXVIII.

An Iron Crown his anxious fore-
head bore;
And well such diadem his heart
became.
Who ne'er his purpose for remorse
gave o'er,
Or check'd his course for piety
or shame;
Who, train'd a soldier, deem'd a
soldier's fame
Might flourish in the wreath of
battles won,
Though neither truth nor honour
deck'd his name;
Who, placed by fortune on a
Monarch's throne,
Reck'd not of Monarch's faith, or
Mercy's kingly tone.

XXXIX.

From a rude isle his ruder lineage
came,
The spark, that, from a suburb-
hovel's hearth
Ascending, wraps some capital in
flame,
Hath not a meaner or more sor-
did birth.
And for the soul that bade him
waste the earth—
The sable land-flood from some
swamp obscure,
That poisons the glad husband-
field with dearth,
And by destruction bids its fame
endure,
Hath not a source more sullen, stag-
nant, and impure.*

*In historical truth, Napoleon I.'s family
was not plebeian.

XL.

Before that Leader strode a shadowy Form;

Her limbs like mist, her torch like meteor show'd,
With which she beckon'd him through fight and storm,

And all he crush'd that cross'd his desperate road,
Nor thought, nor fear'd, nor look'd on what he trode.

Realms could not glut his pride, blood could not slake,
So oft as e'er she shook her torch abroad—

It was AMBITION bade her terrors wake,
Nor deign'd she, as of yore, a milder form to take.

XLI.

No longer now she spurn'd at mean revenge,

Or staid her hand for conquer'd foeman's moan;
As when, the fates of aged Rome to change,

By Cæsar's side she cross'd the Rubicon.
Nor joy'd she to bestow the spoils she won,

As when the banded powers of Greece were task'd
To war beneath the Youth of Macedonia:

No seemly veil her modern minion ask'd,
He saw her hideous face, and loved the fiend unmask'd.

XLII.

That Prelate mark'd his march—
On banners blazed
With battles won in many a distant land,

On eagle-standards and on arms he gazed;

"And hopest thou then," he said, "thy power shall stand?
O, thou hast builded on the shifting sand,

And thou hast temper'd it with slaughter's flood;

And know, fell scourge in the Almighty's hand,
Gore-moisten'd trees shall perish in the bud,
And by a bloody death shall die the Man of Blood!"

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckon'd from his train

A wan fraternal Shade, and bade him kneel,

And paled his temples with the crown of Spain,

While trumpets rang, and heralds cried, "Castile!"

Not that he loved him—No!—In no man's weal,
Scarce in his own, e'er joy'd that sullen heart;

Yet round that throne he bade his warriors wheel,
That the poor Puppet might perform his part,
And be a sceptred slave, at his stern beck to start.

XLIV.

But on the Natives of that Land misused,

Not long the silence of amazement hung,

Nor brook'd they long their friendly faith abused;

For, with a common shriek, the general tongue

Exclaim'd, "To arms!" and fast to arms they sprung.

And VALOUR woke, that Genius of the Land!

Pleasure, and ease, and sloth, aside he flung,

As burst th' awakening Nazarite his band,

When 'gainst his treacherous foes he clench'd his dreadful hand.*

XLV.

That Mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye

Upon the Satraps that begirt him round,

* Samson. See Judges, chap. xv. 9—16.

Now doff'd his royal robe in act to
 fly,
 And from his brow the diadem
 unbound.
 So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle
 wound,
 From Tarick's walls to Bilboa's
 mountains blown,
 These martial satellites hard labour
 found,
 To guard a while his substituted
 throne—
 Light recking of his cause, but bat-
 tling for their own.

XLVI.

From Alpuhara's peak that bugle
 rung,
 And it was echo'd from Coruna's
 wall;
 Stately Seville responsive war-shot
 flung,
 Grenada caught it in her Moorish
 hall;
 Galicia bade her children fight or
 fall,
 Wild Biscay shook his mountain-
 coronet,
 Valencia roused her at the battle-
 call,
 And, foremost still where Val-
 our's sons are met,
 First started to his gun each fiery
 Miquelet.

XLVII.

But unappall'd and burning for
 the fight,
 The Invaders march, of victory
 secure;
 Skilful their force to sever or unite,
 And train'd alike to vanquish or
 endure.
 Nor skilful less, cheap conquest to
 ensure,
 Discord to breathe, and jealousy
 to sow,
 To quell by boasting, and by bribes
 to lure;
 While nought against them bring
 the unpractised foe,
 Save hearts for Freedom's cause, and
 hands for Freedom's blow.

XLVIII.

Proudly they march—but, O! they
 march not forth
 By one hot field to crown a brief
 campaign,
 As when their Eagles, sweeping
 through the North,
 Destroy'd at every stoop an an-
 cient reign!
 Far other fate had Heaven decreed
 for Spain;
 In vain the steel, in vain the
 torch was plied,
 New Patriot armies started from
 the slain,
 High blazed the war, and long,
 and far, and wide,
 And oft the God of Battles blest the
 righteous side.

XLIX.

Nor unatoned, where Freedom's
 foes prevail,
 Remain'd their savage waste.
 With blade and brand,
 By day the Invaders ravaged hill
 and dale,
 But, with the darkness, the
 Guerilla band
 Came like night's tempest, and
 avenged the land,
 And claim'd for blood the retri-
 bution due,
 Probed the hard heart, and lopp'd
 the murd'rous hand;
 And Dawn, when o'er the scene
 her beams she threw,
 Midst ruins they had made, the spoil-
 ers' corpses knew.

L.

What minstrel voice may sing, or
 tongue may tell,
 Amid the vision'd strife from sea
 to sea,
 How oft the Patriot banners rose
 or fell,
 Still honour'd in defeat as vic-
 tory!
 For that sad pageant of events to be,
 Show'd every form of fight by
 field and flood;

Slaughter and Ruin, shouting forth
 their glee,
 Beheld, while riding on the tem-
 pest scud,
 The waters choked with slain, the
 earth bedrench'd with blood!

LI.

Then Zaragoza—blighted be the
 tongue
 That names thy name without
 the honour due!
 For never hath the harp of Minstrel
 rung
 Of faith so felly proved, so firmly
 true!
 Mine, sap, and bomb, thy shat-
 ter'd ruins knew,
 Each art of war's extremity had
 room,
 Twice from thy half-sack'd streets
 the foe withdrew,
 And when at length stern fate
 decreed thy doom,
 They won not Zaragoza, but her chil-
 dren's bloody tomb.

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad city!
 Though in chains,
 Enthral'd thou canst not be!
 Arise, and claim
 Reverence from every heart where
 Freedom reigns,
 For what thou worshippest!—
 thy sainted dame,
 She of the Column, honour'd be
 her name,
 By all, whate'er their creed, who
 honour love!
 And like the sacred relics of the
 flame,
 That gave some martyr to the
 bless'd above,
 To every loyal heart may thy sad em-
 bers prove!

LIII.

Nor thine alone such wreck. Ce-
 rona fair!
 Faithful to death thy heroes shall
 be sung,
 Manning the towers while o'er their
 heads the air

Swart as the smoke from raging
 furnace hung;
 Now thicker dark'ning where the
 mine was sprung,
 Now briefly lightened by the
 cannon's flare,
 Now arch'd with fire-sparks as the
 bomb was flung,
 And redd'ning now with conflag-
 ration's glare,
 While by the fatal light the foes for
 storm prepare.

LIV.

While all around was danger, strife,
 and fear,
 While the earth shook, and dark-
 en'd was the sky,
 And wide Destruction stunn'd the
 listening ear,
 Appall'd the heart, and stupified
 the eye,—
 Afar was heard that thrice-repeated
 cry,
 In which old Albion's heart and
 tongue unite,
 When'er her soul is up, and pulse
 beats high,
 Whether it hail the wine cup or
 the fight,
 And bid each arm be strong, or bid
 each heart be light.

LV.

Don Roderick turn'd him as the
 shout grew loud—
 A varied scene the changeful
 vision show'd,
 For, where the ocean mingled with
 the cloud,
 A gallant navy stemm'd the bil-
 lows broad.
 From mast and stern St. George's
 symbol flow'd,
 Elicent with the silver cross to
 Scotland dear;
 Mottling the sea their landward
 barges row'd,
 And flash'd the sun on bayonet,
 brand, and spear,
 And the wild beach return'd the sea-
 man's jovial cheer.

LVI.

It was a dread, yet spirit-stirring
sight!
The billows foam'd beneath a
thousand oars,
Fast as they land the red-cross
ranks unite,
Legions on legions bright'ning
all the shores.
Then banners rise, and cannon-
signal roars,
Then peals the warlike thunder
of the drum,
Thrills the loud fife, the trumpet-
flourish pours,
And patriot hopes awake, and
doubts are dumb,
For, bold in Freedom's cause, the
bands of Ocean come!

LVII.

A various host they came—whose
ranks display
Each mode in which the warrior
meets the fight,
The deep battalion locks its firm
array,
And meditates his aim the marks-
man light;
Far glance the light of sabres flash-
ing bright,
Where mounted squadrons shake
the echoing mead,
Lacks not artillery breathing flame
and night,
Nor the fleet ordnance whirl'd by
rapid steed,
That rivals lightning's flash in ruin
and in speed.

LVIII.

A various host—from kindred
realms they came,
Brethren in arms, but rivals in
renew—
For yon fair bands shall merry
England claim,
And with their deeds of valour
deck her crown.
Hers their bold port, and hers their
martial frown,
And hers their scorn of death in
freedom's cause,

There eyes of azure, and their
locks of brown,
And the blunt speech that bursts
without a pause,
And freeborn thoughts, which league
the Soldier with the Laws.

LIX.

And, O! loved warriors of the Min-
strel's land!
Yonder your bonnets nod, your
tartans wave!
The rugged form may mark the
mountain band,
And harsher features, and a mien
more grave;
But ne'er in battle-field throbb'd
heart so brave,
As that which beats beneath the
Scottish plaid;
And when the pibroch bids the bat-
tle rave,
And level for the charge your
arms are laid,
Where lives the desperate foe that for
such onset staid!

LX.

Hark! from yon stately ranks what
laughter rings,
Mingling wild mirth with war's
stern minstrelsy,
His jest while each blithe comrade
round him flings,
And moves to death with mili-
tary glee:
Boast, Erin, boast them! tameless,
frank, and free,
In kindness warm, and fierce in
danger known,
Rough nature's children, humor-
ous as she:
And HE, yon Chieftain—strike
the proudest tone
Of thy bold harp, green Isle!—the
Hero is thine own.

LXI.

Now on the scene Vimeira* should
be shown,

* The battle of Vimeira was fought Au-
gust 21st, 1808; Corunna, January 16th, 1809;
Talavera, July 23th, 1809; Busaco, Septem-
ber 27th, 1810.

On Talavera's fight should Roderick gaze,
 And hear Corunna wail her battle won,
 And see Busaco's crest with lightning blaze:—
 But shall fond fable mix with heroes' praise?
 Hath Fiction's stage for Truth's long triumphs room?
 And dare her wild-flowers mingle with the bays,
 That claim a long eternity to bloom
 Around the warrior's crest, and o'er the warrior's tomb!

XLII.

Or may I give adventurous Fancy scope,
 And stretch a bold hand to the awful veil
 That hides futurity from anxious hope,
 Bidding beyond it scenes of glory hail,
 And painting Europe rousing at the tale
 Of Spain's invaders from her confines hurl'd,
 While kindling nations buckle on their mail,
 And Fame, with clarion-blast and wings unfurl'd,
 To Freedom and Revenge awakes an injured World?

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast,
 Since Fate has mark'd futurity her own:
 Yet fate resigns to worth the glorious past,
 The deeds recorded, and the laurels won.
 Then, though the Vault of Destiny be gone,
 King, Prelate, all the phantasms of my brain,
 Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun,

Yet grant for faith, for valour, and for Spain,
 One note of pride and fire, a Patriot's parting strain!

Conclusion.

I.

“Who shall command Estrella's mountain tide
 Back to the source, when tempest-chafed, to hie?
 Who, when Gascogne's vex'd gulf is raging wide,
 Shall hush it as a nurse her infant's cry?
 His magic power let such vain boaster try,
 And when the torrent shall his voice obey,
 And Biscay's whirlwinds list his lullaby,
 Let him stand forth and bar mine eagles' way,
 And they shall heed his voice, and at his bidding stay.

II.

“Else ne'er to stoop, till high on Lisbon's towers
 They close their wings, the symbol of our yoke,
 And their own sea hath whelm'd yon red-cross Powers!”
 Thus, on the summit of Alverca's rock,
 To Marshal, Duke, and Peer, Gaul's Leader spoke.
 While downward on the land his legions press,
 Before them it was rich with vine and flock,
 And smiled like Eden in her summer dress;
 Behind their wasteful march, a reeking wilderness.

III.

And shall the boastful Chief maintain his word,
 Though Heaven hath heard the wailings of the land,
 Though Lusitania whether vengeful sword,

Though Britons arm, and WEL-
LINGTON command!
No! grim Busaco's iron ridge shall
stand
An adamantine barrier to his
force;
And from its base shall wheel his
shatter'd band,
As from the unshaken rock the
torrent hoarse
Bears off its broken waves, and seeks
a devious course.

IV.

Yet not because Alcoba's mountain-
hawk
Hath on his best and bravest
made her food,
In numbers confident, yon Chief
shall balk
His Lord's imperial thirst for
spoil and blood:
For full in view the promised con-
quest stood,
And Lisbon's matrons from their
walls might sum
The myriads that had half the world
subdued,
And hear the distant thunders of
the drum,
That bids the bands of France to
storm and havoc come.

V.

Four moons have heard these thun-
ders idly roll'd,
Have seen these wistful myriads
eye their prey,
As famish'd wolves survey a guard-
ed fold—
But in the middle path a Lion
lay!
At length they move—but not to
battle-fray,
Nor blaze yon fires where meets
the manly fight;
Beacons of infamy, they light the
way
Where cowardice and cruelty
unite
To damn with double shame their
ignominious flight!

VI.

O triumph for the Fiends of Lust
and Wrath!
Ne'er to be told, yet ne'er to be
forgot,
What wantom horrors mark'd their
wreckful path!
The peasant butcher'd in his
ruin'd cot,
The hoary priest even at the altar
shot,
Childhood and age given o'er to
sword and flame,
Woman to infamy;—no crime for-
got,
By which inventive demons might
proclaim
Immortal hate to man, and scorn of
God's great name!

VII.

The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
With horror paused to view the
havoc done,
Gave his poor crust to feed some
wretch forlorn,
Wiped his stern eye, then fiercer
grasp'd his gun.
Nor with less zeal shall Britain's
peaceful son
Exult the debt of sympathy to
pay;
Riches nor poverty the tax shall
shun,
Nor prince nor peer, the wealthy
nor the gay,
Nor the poor peasant's mite, nor
bard's more worthless lay.

VIII.

But thou—unfoughten wilt thou
yield to Fate,
Minion of Fortune, now miscall'd
in vain!
Can vantage-ground no confidence
create,
Marcella's pass, nor Guarda's
mountain chain,
Vainglorious fugitive! yet turn
again!
Behold, where, named by some
prophetic Seer,

Flows Honour's Fountain,* as fore-
doom'd the stain
From thy dishonour'd name and
arms to clear—
Fallen Child of Fortune, turn, redeem
her favour here!

IX.

Yet, ere thou turn'st, collect each
distant aid;
Those chief that never heard the
lion roar!
Within whose souls lives not a
trace portray'd
Of Talavera, or Mondego's shore!
Marshal each band thou hast, and
summon more;
Of war's fell stratagems exhaust
the whole;
Rank upon rank, squadron on
squadron pour,
Legion on legion on thy foeman
roll,
And weary out his arm—thou canst
not quell his soul.

X.

O vainly gleams with steel Agueda's
shore,
Vainly thy squadrons hide As-
suava's plain,
And front the flying thunders as
they roar,
With frantic charge and tenfold
odds, in vain!
And what avails thee that, for CAM-
ERON slain,
Wild from his plaided ranks the
yell was given—
Vengeance and grief gave moun-
tain-rage the rein,
And, at the bloody spear-point
headlong driven,
Thy Despot's giant guards fled like
the rack of heaven.

XI.

Go, baffled boaster! teach thy
haughty mood
To plead at thine imperious mas-
ter's throne,

Say, thou hast left his legions in
their blood,
Deceived his hopes, and frus-
trated thine own;
Say, that thine utmost skill and
valour shown,
By British skill and valour were
outriv'd;
Last say, thy conqueror was WEL-
LINGTON!
And if he chafe, be his own for-
tune tried—
God and our cause to friend, the ven-
ture we'll abide.

XII.

But you, ye heroes of that well-
fought day,
How shall a bard, unknowing
and unknown,
His meed to each victorious leader
pay,
Or bind on every brow the laur-
els won?
Yet fain my harp would wake its
boldest tone,
O'er the wide sea to hail CADO-
GAN brave;
And he, perchance, the minstrel-
note might own,
Mindful of meeting brief that
Fortune gave
Mid yon far western isles that hear
the Atlantic rave.

XIII.

Yes! hard the task, when Britons
wield the sword,
To give each Chief and every field
its fame:
Hark! Albuera thunders BERES-
FORD,
And Red Barosa shouts for daunt-
less GRÈME!
O for a verse of tumult and of
flame,
Bold as the bursting of their
cannon sound,
To bid the world re-echo to their
fame!
For never, upon gory battle-
ground,
With conquest's well-bought wreath
were braver victors crown'd!

* The literal translation of *Fuentes d' Honro*.

XIV.

O who shall grudge him Albuera's
 bays,
 Who brought a race regenerate
 to the field,
 Roused them to emulate their
 fathers' praise,
 Temper'd their headlong rage,
 their courage steel'd,
 And raised fair Lusitania's fallen
 shield,
 And gave new edge to Lusitania's
 sword,
 And taught her sons forgotten arms
 to wield—
 Shiver'd my harp, and burst its
 every chord,
 If it forget thy worth, victorious
 BERESFORD!

XV.

Not on that bloody field of battle
 won,
 Though Gaul's proud legions
 roll'd like mist away,
 Was half his self-devoted valour
 shown,—
 He gaged but life on that illustrious
 day;
 But when he toil'd those squadrons
 to array,
 Who fought like Britons in the
 bloody game,
 Sharper than Polish pike or asagay,
 He braved the shafts of censure
 and of shame,
 And, dearer far than life, he pledged
 a soldier's fame.

XVI.

Nor be his praise o'erpast who
 strove to hide
 Beneath the warrior's vest affec-
 tion's wound,
 Whose wish Heaven for his coun-
 try's weal denied;
 Danger and fate he sought, but
 glory found.

From clime to clime, where'er war's
 trumpets sound,
 The wanderer went; yet, Cale-
 donia! still
 Thine was his thought in march
 and tented ground;
 He dreamed 'mid Alpine cliffs of
 Athole's hill,
 And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyn-
 doch's lovely rill.

XVII.

O hero of a race renown'd of old,
 Whose war-cry oft has waked
 the battle-swell,
 Since first distinguish'd in the on-
 set bold,
 Wild sounding when the Roman
 rampart fell!
 By Wallace' side it rung the South-
 ron's knell,
 Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibber,
 own'd its fame,
 Tummell's rude pass can of its
 terrors tell,
 But ne'er from prouder field
 arose the name,
 Than when wild ronda learn'd the
 conquering shout of GRÈME!

XVIII.

But all too long, through seas un-
 known and dark,
 (With Spencer's parable I close
 my tale,)
 By shoal and rock hath steer'd my
 venturous bark,
 And landward now I drive be-
 fore the gale.
 And now the blue and distant
 shore I hail,
 And nearer now I see the port
 expand,
 And now I gladly furl my weary
 sail,
 And as the prow light touches
 on the strand,
 I strike my red-cross flag and bind
 my skiff to land.

MARMION.

To the Right Honourable HENRY LORD MONTAGU, &c. &c. &c., this romance is inscribed by the author.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the Public have honoured with some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of MARMION must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September, 1513.

ASHESTIEL, 1808.

Alas! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish bard should wake the string,
The triumph of our foes to tell!

LEYDEN.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, ESQ.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear;
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hem our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:
Now murmuring hoarse, and frequent
seen

Through bush and brier, no longer
green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled
speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple
gleam;
Away hath pass'd the heather-bell
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath-
fell;

Sallow his brow, and russet bare
 Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
 The sheep, before the pinching
 heaven,
 To shelter'd dale and down are driven,
 Where yet some faded herbage pines,
 And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
 In meek despondency they eye
 The wither'd sward and wintry sky,
 And far beneath their summer hill,
 Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:
 The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
 And wraps him closer from the cold;
 His dogs, no merry circles wheel,
 But, shivering, follow at his heel;
 A cowering glance they often cast,
 As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and
 wild,
 As best befits the mountain child,
 Feel the sad influence of the hour,
 And wail the daisy's vanished flower;
 Their summer gambols tell, and
 mourn,
 And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
 And birds and lambs again be gay,
 And blossoms clothe the hawthorn
 spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's
 flower
 Again shall paint your summer bower;
 Again the hawthorn shall supply
 The garlands you delight to tie;
 The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
 The wild birds carol to the round,
 And while you frolic light as they,
 Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
 New life revolving summer brings;
 The genial call dead nature hears,
 And in her glory reappears.
 But oh! my country's wintry state
 What second spring shall renovate?
 What powerful call shall bid arise
 The buried warlike and the wise;
 The mind that thought for Britain's
 weal,

The hand that grasp'd the victor
 steel?

The vernal sun new life bestows

Even on the meanest flower that
 blows;
 But vainly, vainly may he shine,
 Where glory weeps o'er NELSON'S
 shrine;
 And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
 That shrouds, O PRRT, thy hallowed
 tomb!

Deep grav'd in every British heart,
 O never let those names depart!
 Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
 Who victor died on Gadite wave;*
 To him, as to the burning levin,
 Short, bright, resistless course was
 given.
 Where'er his country's foes were
 found,
 Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
 Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
 Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was
 no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd
 worth,
 Who bade the conqueror go forth,
 And launch'd that thunderbolt of
 war
 On Egypt, Hafnia, † Trafalgar;
 Who, born to guide such high em-
 prize,
 For Britain's weal was early wise;
 Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
 For Britain's sins, an early grave!
 His worth, who, in his mightiest hour
 A bauble held the pride of power,
 Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
 And served his Albion for herself;
 Who, when the frantic crowd amain
 Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
 O'er their wild mood full conquest
 gain'd,
 The pride, he would not crush, re-
 strain'd,
 Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier
 cause,
 And brought the freeman's arm, to
 aid the freeman's laws.

* Nelson. *Gadite wave*, sea of Cadiz, or
 Gades.

† Copenhagen.

Had'st thou but lived, though
 stripp'd of power,
 A watchman on the lonely tower,
 Thy thrilling trump had roused the
 land,
 When fraud or danger were at hand;
 By thee, as by the beacon-light,
 Our pilots had kept course aright;
 As some proud column, though
 alone,
 Thy strength had propp'd the totter-
 ing throne:
 Now is the stately column broke,
 The beacon-light is quench'd in
 smoke,
 The trumpet's silver sound is still,
 The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,
 When Death, just hovering, claim'd
 his prey,
 With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
 Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
 Each call for needful rest repell'd,
 With dying hand the rudder held,
 Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
 The steerage of the realm gave way!
 Then, while on Britain's thousand
 plains,
 One unpolluted church remains,
 Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent
 around
 The bloody tocsin's maddening
 sound,
 But still, upon the hallow'd day,
 Convoke the swains to praise and
 pray;
 While faith and civil peace are dear,
 Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
 He, who preserved them, *Prrr*, lies
 here!

Nor yet suppress the generous
 sigh,
 Because his rival slumbers nigh;
 Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
 Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
 For talents mourn, untimely lost,
 When best employ'd, and wanted
 most;
 Mourn genius high, and lore pro-
 found,

And wit that loved to play, not
 wound;
 And all the reasoning powers divine,
 To penetrate, resolve, combine;
 And feelings keen, and fancy's
 glow,—
 They sleep with him who sleeps be-
 low:
 And, if thou mourn'st they could not
 save
 From error him who owns this grave,
 Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
 And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
 Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and
 kings;
 Where stiff the hand, and still the
 tongue,
 Of those who fought, and spoke, and
 sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
 The distant notes of holy song,
 As if some angel spoke agen,
 "All peace on earth, good-will to
 men;"
 If ever from an English heart,
 O, *here* let prejudice depart,
 And, partial feeling cast aside,
 Record, that Fox a Briton died!
 When Europe crouch'd to France's
 yoke,
 And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
 And the firm Russian's purpose brave,
 Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
 Even then dishonour's peace he
 spurn'd,
 The sullied olive-branch return'd,
 Stood for his country's glory fast,
 And nail'd her colours to the mast!
 Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
 A portion in this honour'd grave,
 And ne'er held marble in its trust
 Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers en-
 dow'd,
 How high they soar'd above the crowd!
 Theirs was no common party race,
 Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
 Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
 Shook realms and nations in its jar;
 Beneath each banner proud to stand,

Look'd up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were
known

The names of PRR and Fox alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent
with these,

The wine of life is on the lees.
Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
For ever tumb'd beneath the stone,
Where—taming thought to human
pride!—

The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;
O'er PRR the mournful requiem
sound,

And Fox's shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry,—
"Here let their discord with them die.
Speak not for those a separate doom,
Whom Fate made Brothers in the
tomb;

But search the land of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise;
Not even your Britain's groans can
pierce

The leaden silence of your hearse;
Then, O, how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmark'd from northern
clime,

Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme;
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The Bard you deign'd to praise, your
deathless names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay a while,
My wilder'd fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!
For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood,
That throbs through bard in bard-
like mood,

Were here a tribute mean and low,

Though all their mingled streams
could flow—

Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide of ecstasy!—
It will not be—it may not last—
The vision of enchantment's past:
Like frostwork in the morning ray,
The fancied fabric melts away;
Each Gothic arch, memorial-stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle, are gone;
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copsewood wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son:
Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day,
In plucking from yon fen the reed,
And watch it floating down the
Tweed;

Or idly list the shrilling lay,
With which the milkmaid cheers her
way,

Marking its cadence rise and fall,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale:
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn;
Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one, who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learn'd taste re-
fin'd.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly
tell,

(For few have read romance so well),
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
As when the champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,

Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied
corse ;

Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to
move,

(Alas, that lawless was their love !)
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights ; or
when,

A sinful man, and unconfess'd,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.

The mightiest chiefs of British
song

Scorn'd not such legends to prolong :
They gleam through Spenser's elfin
dream,

And mix in Milton's heavenly theme ;
And Dryden, in immortal strain,

Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald king and court

Bade him toil on, to make them sport ;
Demanded for their niggard pay,

Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play ;

The world defrauded of the high de-
sign,

Profaned the God-given strength,
and marr'd the lofty line.

Warm'd by such names well may we
then,

Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance

In the fair fields of old romance ;
Or seek the moated castle's cell,

Where long through talisman and
spell,

While tyrants ruled, and damsels
wept,

Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept :
There sound the harpings of the

North,

Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick again,

In all his arms, with all his train,
Shield, lance, and brand, and plume,

and scarf,

Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
And wizard with his wand of might,
And errant maid on palfrey white.

Around the Genius weave their
spells,

Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells ;
Mystery, half veil'd and half reveal'd ;

And Honour, with his spotless shield ;
Attention, with fix'd eye ; and Fear,

That loves the tale she shrinks to
hear ;

And gentle Courtesy ; and Faith,
Unchanged by sufferings, time, or

death ;

And Valour, lion-mettled lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement
shown,

A worthy meed may thus be won ;
Ytene's* oaks—beneath whose shade

Their theme the merry minstrels
made,

Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,
And that Red King, † who, while of

old,

Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—

Ytene's oaks have heard again
Renewed such legendary strain ;

For thou hast sung, how He of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,

For Oriana, foil'd in fight
The Necromancer's felon might ;

And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love ; ‡

Hear, then, attentive to my lay,
A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST.

The Castle.

I.

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and
deep,

And Cheviot's mountains lone :

The battled towers, the donjon keep,
The loophole grates, where captives
weep,

* *Ytene*, ancient name of the New Forest,
Hants.

† William Rufus.

‡ *Partenopex*, a poem by W. S. Rose.

The flanking walls that round it
sweep,

In yellow lustre shone.

The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seem'd forms of giant height:
Their armour, as it gaunt the rays,
Flash'd back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light.

II.

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
Now faded, as the fading ray

Less bright, and less, was flung;

The evening gale had scarce the
power

To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
So heavily it hung.

The scouts had parted on their search,

The Castle gates were barr'd;

Above the gloomy portal arch,

Timing his footsteps to a march,

The Warder kept his guard;

Low humming, as he paced along,

Some ancient Border gathering song.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears;

He looks abroad, and soon appears,

O'er Horncliff-hill a plump of
spears,*

Beneath a pennon gay;

A horseman, darting from the
crowd,

Like lightning from a summer
cloud,

Spurs on his mettled courser proud,

Before the dark array.

Beneath the sable palisade,

That closed the Castle barricade,

His bugle horn he blew;

The warder hasted from the wall,

And warn'd the Captain in the hall,

For well the blast he knew;

And joyfully that knight did call,

To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.

“Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,†
Bring pasties of the doe,

And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,

And every minstrel sound his glee,

And all our trumpets blow;

And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;

Lord MARMION waits below!”

Then to the Castle's lower ward

Sped forty yeomen tall,

The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,

Raised the portcullis' ponderous
guard,

The lofty palisade unspar'd

And let the drawbridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,

Proudly his red-roan charger trode,

His helm hung at the saddlebow;

Well by his visage you might know

He was a stalworth knight, and keen,

And had in many a battle been;

The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd

A token true of Bosworth field;

His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,

Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to
ire;

Yet lines of thought upon his cheek

Did deep design and counsel speak.

His forehead, by his casque worn
bare,

His thick moustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and
there,

But more through toil than age;

His square-turn'd joints, and strength
of limb,

Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,

But in close fight a champion grim,

In camps a leader sage.

VI.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,

In mail and plate of Milan steel;

But his strong helm, of mighty cost,

Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd;

Amid the plumage of the crest,

A falcon hover'd on her nest,

With wings outspread, and forward
breast;

E'en such a falcon, on his shield,

Soar'd sable in an azure field:

The golden legend bore aright,

* Body of men-at-arms.

† Malinsey.

Who cheeks at me, to death is
dight.

Blue was the charger's broider'd rein;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching
mane;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with
gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to
claim;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could
sway,
And lightly bear the ring away;
Nor less with courteous precepts
stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at
board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms came at their
backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe;
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so
strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along,
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broider'd on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send;
Each held a boar-spear tough and
strong,
And at their
Their dusty p

Show'd they had march'd a weary
way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the Castle-yard;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared:
Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes ad-
vanced,
The trumpets flourish'd brave,
The cannon from the ramparts
glanced,
And thundering welcome gave.
A blithe salute, in martial sort,
The minstrels well might sound,
For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the
court,
He scatter'd angels* round.
"Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
Stout heart, and open hand!
Well dost thou brook thy gallant
roan,
Thou flower of English land!"

XI.

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts† deck,
With silver scutcheon round their
neck,
Stood on the steps of stone,
By which you reach the donjon gate,
And there, with herald pomp and
state,
They hail'd Lord Marmion:
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town;
And he, their courtesies to requite,

* A gold coin of the period, value about ten shillings.

† The embroidered overcoat of the heralds.

Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
 All as he lighted down.
 "Now, largesse, largesse,* Lord Marmion,
 Knight of the crest of gold!
 A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
 Ne'er guarded heart so bold."

XII.

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
 Where the guests stood all aside,
 And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
 And the heralds loudly cried,
 —"Room, lordings, room for Lord Marmion,
 With the crest and helm of gold!
 Full well we know the trophies won
 In the lists of Cottiswold:
 There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
 'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
 To him he lost his lady-love,
 And to the King his land.
 Ourselves beheld the listed field,
 A sight both sad and fair;
 We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
 And saw his saddle bare;
 We saw the victor win the crest
 He wears with worthy pride;
 And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
 His foeman's scutcheon tied.
 Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
 Room, room, ye gentles gay,
 For him who conquer'd in the right,
 Marmion of Fontenaye!"

XIII.

Then stepp'd to meet that noble Lord,
 Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
 Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
 And Captain of the Hold.
 He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
 Raised o'er the pavement high,
 And placed him in the upper place—
 They feasted full and high;

* The cry by which the bounty of knights and nobles was thanked. The word is still used in the hop gardens of Kent and Sussex, as a demand for payment from strangers entering them.

The whiles a Northern harper rude
 Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
 "How the fierce Thirwall, and Ridelays all,
 Stout Willimondswick,
 And Hardriding Dick,
 And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
 Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
 And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw."

Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
 The harper's barbarous lay;
 Yet much he prais'd the pains he took,
 And well those pains did pay:
 For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
 Dy knight should ne'er be heard
 in vain.

XIV.

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
 "Of your fair courtesy,
 I pray you bide some little space
 In this poor tower with me.
 Here may you keep your arms from rust,
 May breathe your war-horse well;
 Seldom hath pass'd a week but giust
 Or feat of arms befell:
 The Scots can rein a mettled steed;
 And love to couch a spear;—
 Saint George! a stirring life they lead,
 That have such neighbours near.
 Then stay with us a little space,
 Our northern wars to learn;
 I pray you, for your lady's grace!"
 Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The Captain mark'd his alter'd look,
 And gave a squire the sign;
 A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
 And crown'd it high in wine.
 "Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion:
 But first I pray thee fair,
 Where hast thou left that page of thine,
 That used to serve thy cup of wine,

Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often mark'd his cheeks were
wet,

With tears he fain would hide:
His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed;

But meeter seem'd for lady fair,
'To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and
rare,

The slender silk to lead;
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom—when he sigh'd,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!

Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
'To serve in lady's bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?"

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such
jest;

He roll'd his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppress'd,
Yet made a calm reply:

"That boy thou thought'st so goodly
fair,

He might not brook the northern air,
More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarn:

Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?

Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?"—
He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whisper'd light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmark'd, at least unreck'd, the
taunt,

Careless the Knight replied,
"No bird, whose feathers gaily flaunt,
Delights in cage to bide:

Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemm'd in by battlement and fosse,
And many a darksome tower;

And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light,

In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon on our glove;
But where shall we find leash or band,
For dame that loves to rove?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She'll stoop when she has tired her
wing."—

XVIII.

"Nay, if with Royal James's bride,
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear;
For, to the Scottish court address'd,
I journey at our King's behest,
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me, and mine, a trusty guide.

I have not ridden in Scotland since
James back'd the cause of that mock
prince

Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.

Then did I march with Surrey's
power,

What time we razed old Ayton
tower."

XIX.

"For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
Norham can find you guides enow;
For here be some have prick'd as far,
On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar;
Have drunk the monks of St. Bothan's
ale,

And driven the beeves of Lauderdale;
Married the wives of Greenlaw's
goods,

And given them light to set their
hoods."

XX.

"Now, in good sooth," Lord Mar-
mion cried,

"Were I in warlike wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack,
'Than your stout forayers at my back,

But, as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know,
Why through all Scotland, near and
far,

Their king is mustering troops for
war,

The sight of plundering border spears

Might justify suspicious fears,
 And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
 Break out in some unseemly broil:
 A herald were my fitting guide ;
 Or friar, sworn in peace to bide ;
 Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
 Or strolling pilgrim, at the least."

XXI.

The Captain mused a little space,
 And pass'd his hand across his face.
 —"Fain would I find the guide you
 want,

But ill may spare a pursuivant,
 The only men that safe can ride
 Mine errands on the Scottish side:
 And though a bishop built this fort,
 Few holy brethren here resort ;
 Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
 Since our last seige we have not seen:
 The mass he might not sing or say,
 Upon one stinted meal a-day ;
 So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
 And pray'd for our success the while.
 Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
 Is all too well in case to ride ;
 The priest of Shoreswood —he
 could rain

The wildest war-horse in your train ;
 But then, no spearman in the hall
 Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
 Friar John of Tillmouth were the
 man :

A blithesome brother at the can,
 A welcome guest in hall and bower,
 He knows each castle, town, and
 tower,

In which the wine and ale is good,
 'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
 But that good man, as ill befalls,
 Hath seldom left our castle walls,
 Since, on the Vigil of St. Bede,
 In evil hour he cross'd the Tweed,
 To teach Dame Alison her creed.
 Old Bughrig found him with his
 wife ;

And John, an enemy to strife,
 Sans frock and hood, fled for his
 life.

The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
 That, if again he venture o'er,
 He shall shrive penitent no more.

Little he loves such risks, I know ;
 Yet in your guard perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
 Carved to his uncle and that lord,
 And reverently took up the word.
 "Kind Uncle, woe were we each one,
 If harm should hap to Brother John.
 He is a man of mirthful speech,
 Can many a game and gambol teach ;
 Full well at tables can he play,
 And sweep at bowls the stake away.
 None can a lustier carol bawl,
 The needfullest among us all,
 When time hangs heavy in the hall,
 And snow comes thick at Christmas
 tide,

And we can neither hunt, nor ride
 A foray on the Scottish side.
 The vowed revenge of Bughrig rude,
 May end in worse than loss of hood.
 Let Friar John, in safety, still
 In chimney-corner snore his fill,
 Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill :
 Last night, to Norham there came one,
 Will better guide Lord Marmion." —
 "Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,
 Well hast thou spoke ; say forth thy
 say."

XXIII.

"Here is a holy Palmer come,
 From Salem first, and last from Rome ;
 One that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
 And visited each holy shrine
 In Araby and Palestine ;
 On hills of Armenie hath been,
 Where Noah's ark may yet be seen ;
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
 Which parted at the prophet's rod ;
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw
 The mount where Israel heard the
 law,
 'Mid thunder-dint, and flashing
 levin,
 And shadows, mists, and darkness,
 given.

He shows Saint James's cockle-shell,
 Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell ;

And of that Grot where Olives nod,
 Where, darling of each heart and
 eye,

From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.

XXIV.

“To stout Saint George of Norwich
merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
For his sins’ pardon hath he pray’d.
He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the
Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or
lake.
This were a guide o’er moor and
dale;
But, when our John hath quaff’d his
ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he
goes.”—

XXV.

“Gramercy!” quoth Lord Marmion,
“Full loth were I, that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me,
Were placed in fear or jeopardy.
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I’ll pay his
meed,
Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy rambles; still
They know to charm a weary hill,
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way.”—

XXVI.

“Ah! noble sir,” young Selby said,
And finger on his lip he laid,
“This man knows much, perchance
e’en more
Than he could learn by holy lore.
Still to himself he’s muttering,
And shrinks as at some unseen
thing.
Last night we listen’d at his cell;
Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth
to tell,

He murmur’d on till morn, howe’er
No living mortal could be near.
Sometimes I thought I heard it
plain,
As other voices spoke again.
I cannot tell—I like it not—
Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
No conscience clear, and void of
wrong,
Can rest awake, and pray so long.
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have mark’d ten aves, and two
creeds.”

XXVII.

—“Let pass,” quoth Marmion; “by
my fay,
This man shall guide me on my
way,
Although the great arch-fiend and
he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer to the Castle-hall.”
The summon’d Palmer came in
place;
His sable cowl o’erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter’s keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop shell his cap did deck:
The crucifix around his neck
Was from Loretto brought;
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand
Show’d pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
No lord, nor knight, was there more
tall,
Nor had a statelier step withal,
Or look’d more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with
toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look’d haggard wild:

Poor wretch! the mother that him
bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we
know—

For deadly fear can time outgo,
And blanch at once the hair;
Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's
bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning
tide,

To Scottish court to be his guide.
"But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrews bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good St. Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;
Thence to St. Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams
dispel,

And the crazed brain restore:
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
Or bid it throb no more!"

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of
sleep,

Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.

Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the
rest.

Who drained it merrily;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby pressed him court-
eously.

This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard,
But the slow footstep of the guard,
Pacing his sober round.

XXXI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
And first the chapel doors unclose;
Then, after morning rites were done,
(A hasty mass from Friar John,)
And knight and squire had broke
their fast,

On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to
horse:

Then came the stirrup-cup in course:
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion
paid,

Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last.
Then loudly rung the trumpet call,
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall

And shook the Scottish shore;
Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar;
Till they rolled forth upon the air,
And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO
SECOND.

TO

THE REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A.M.

Ashestiel, Etrick Forest.

THE scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourish'd once a forest fair,¹⁹
When these waste glens with copse
were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon Thorn—perchance whose prick-
ly spears
Have fenced him for three hundred
years,
While fell around his green com-
peers—

Yon lonely Thorn, would he could
tell

The chances of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling
bough;

Would he could tell how deep the
shade

A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan * to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his
head,

With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain
sprung,

O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook !

"Here, in my shade," methinks he'd
say,

"The mighty stag at noon-tide lay :
The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
(The neighbouring dingle bears his
name,)

With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop, against the moon to howl ;
The mountain-boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet ;
While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by, through gay green-
wood.

Then off, from Newark's riven tower,
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power :
A thousand vassals muster'd round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and
hound ;

And I might see the youth intent,
Guard every pass with crossbow
bent ;

And through the brake the rangers
stalk,

And fal'ners hold the ready hawk ;
And foresters, in greenwood trim,
Lead in the leash the gazehounds
grim,

Attentive, as the bratchet's† bay
From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them as he broke away.

* Mountain ash.

† Slowhound.

The startled quarry bounds amain,
As fast the startled greyhounds strain,
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss below ;
While all the rocking hills reply,
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters'
cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud huntings many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
Where erst the outlaw drew his ar-
row.‡

But not more blithe that silvan
court,

Than we have been at humbler sport ;
Though small our pomp, and mean
our game,

Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the
same.

Remember'st thou my greyhounds
true ?

O'er holt or hill there never slow,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.

Nor dull, between each merry chase,
Pass'd by the intermitted space ;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic and in Gothic lore :

We mark'd each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between ;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
But had its legend or its song.

All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill !§
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known
gun,

And while his honest heart glows
warm,

At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the
Hills !"

No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet saw

‡ Murray, the Robin Hood of Ettrick, but inferior in good qualities to our archer.

§ A seat of the Duke of Buccleuch on the Yarrow.

By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh ;
 No youthful Baron's left to grace
 The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
 And ape, in manly step and tone,
 The majesty of Oberon :
 And she is gone, whose lovely face
 Is but her least and lowest grace ;
 Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere
 given,
 To show our earth the charms of
 Heaven,
 She could not glide along the air,
 With form more light, or face more
 fair.
 No more the widow's deafen'd ear
 Grows quick that lady's step to hear :
 At noontide she expects her not,
 Nor busies her to trim the cot ;
 Pensive she turns her humming-
 wheel,
 Or pensive cooks her orphan's meal ;
 Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
 The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair,—which hills so closely
 bind,
 Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
 Though much he fret, and chafe, and
 toil,
 Till all his eddying currents boil,—
 Her long-descended lord is gone,
 And left us by the stream alone.
 And much I miss those sportive
 boys,
 Companions of my mountain joys,
 Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
 When thought is speech, and speech
 is truth.
 Close to my side, with what delight
 They press'd to hear of Wallace
 wight,
 When, pointing to his airy mound,
 I call'd his ramparts holy ground !
 Kindled their brows to hear me
 speak ;
 And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
 Despite the difference of our years,
 Return again the glow of theirs.
 Ah, happy boys ! such feelings pure,
 They will not, cannot, long endure ;
 Condemn'd to stem the world's rude
 tide,

You may not linger by the side ;
 For Fate shall thrust you from the
 shore,
 And Passion ply the sail and oar.
 Yet cherish the remembrance still,
 Of the lone mountain, and the rill ;
 For trust, dear boys, the time will
 come,
 When fiercer transport shall be
 dumb,
 And you will think right frequently,
 But, well, I hope, without a sigh,
 On the free hours that we have spent
 Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions
 gone,
 We doubly feel ourselves alone,
 Something, my friend, we yet may
 gain ;
 There is a pleasure in this pain :
 It soothes the love of lonely rest,
 Deep in each gentler heart impress'd.
 'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
 And stifled soon by mental broils ;
 But in a bosom thus prepared,
 Its still small voice is often heard,
 Whispering a mingled sentiment,
 'Twixt resignation and content.
 Oft in my mind such thoughts
 awake,
 By lone St. Mary's silent lake ;
 Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor
 sedge,
 Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge ;
 Abrupt and sheer, the mountains
 sink
 At once upon the level brink ;
 And just a trace of silver sand
 Marks where the water meets the
 land.
 Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
 Each hill's huge outline you may
 view ;
 Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
 Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is
 there,
 Save where, of land, yon slender line
 Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd
 pine.
 Yet even this nakedness has power,
 And aids the feeling of the hour :

Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing conceal'd might
lie;

Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone,
might dwell;

There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:

And silence aids—though the steep
hills

Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horses hoof-tread sounds too
rude,

So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his
toil,

And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.

If age had tamed the passions'
strife,

And Fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet
to dwell,

And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton long'd to spend his
age.

'Twere sweet to mark the setting day,
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;

And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake, and mountain's
side,

To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and
grey;"

Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd
tower,

And think on Yarrow's faded Flower:
And when that mountain-sound I
heard,

Which bids us be for storm pre-
pared.

The distant rustling of his wings,

As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave;
That Wizard Priest's, whose bones are
thrust

From company of holy dust;
On which no sunbeam ever shines—
(So superstition's creed divines)—

Thence view the lake with sullen roar,
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild swans mount the
gale,

Spread wide through mist their
snowy sail,

And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave:
Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway.
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the Wizard Priest was
come,

To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and
strange,
Till from the task my brow I clear'd,
And smiled to think that I had fear'd.

But chief, 'twere sweet to think
such life,
(Though but escape from fortune's
strife,)

Something most matchless good and
wise,

A great and grateful sacrifice;
And deem each hour to musing given,
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such peaceful solitudes displease:

He loves to drown his bosom's jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer's choice had
been

Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark
Lochskene.

There eagles scream from isle to shore ;

Down all the rocks the torrents roar ;
O'er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven ;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.

Rises the fog-smoke, white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as if condemned to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prison'd by enchanter's spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.

And well that Palmer's form and mien

Had suited with the stormy scene,
Just on the edge, straining his ken
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,

Toils with the rocks the roaring linn ;
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,

White as the snowy charger's tail,
Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,
To many a Border theme has rung :
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

CANTO SECOND.

The Convent.

I.

THE breeze which swept away the smoke,

Round Norham Castle roll'd,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning flash and thunder-stroke,

As Marmion left the Hold.
It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,

It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,

Bound to St. Cuthbert's Holy Isle,

It bore a bark along.

Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home ;

The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily

Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight ;

For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II.

'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to green-wood shades,

Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage.

One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,

With many a benedicite ;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray ;
Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog,
nigh,

His round black head, and sparkling eye,

Rear'd o'er the foaming spray ;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disorder'd by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy ;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist.
Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—

The Abbess and the Novice Clare.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love, to her ear, was but a name,

Combined with vanity and shame;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall:
The deadliest sin her mind could
reach,

Was of monastic rule the breach;
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate St. Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower;
Forthis, with carving rare and quaint,
She deck'd the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems emboss'd.
The poor her Convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school;
Her cheek was pale, her form was
spare;

Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
Though vain of her religious sway,
She loved to see her maids obey.
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess
well.

Sad was this voyage to the dame;
Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with St. Cuthbert's Abbot old,
And 'Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
A chapter of St. Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair;
As yet, a novice unprofess'd,
Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
She was betroth'd to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land:
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud within St. Hilda's gloom,
Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seem'd to mark the waves below;
Nay, seem'd, so fix'd her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—'twas seeming
all—

Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur'd
there;

There saw she, where some careless
hand

O'er a dead corpse had heap'd the
sand,

To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—
These charms might tame the fiercest
breast;

Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontrolled,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a vigin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame,
Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl and
knife,

Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those
who lay

Prison'd in Cuthbert's islet grey.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive
rise,

And catch the nun's delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them
lay;

And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
'They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck
floods

Rush to the sea through sounding
woods;
They pass'd the tower of Widdering-
ton,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good saint who own'd the
cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's
name;
And next, they cross'd themselves, to
hear
The whitening breakers sound so
near,
Where, boiling through the rocks,
they roar,
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough,
mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle, with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that abbey frown'd,
With massive arches broad and
round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and
low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley'd walk

To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain:
And needful was such strength to
these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years
withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates'
hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilt in a later style,
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had
been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they near'd his turrets
strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's
song,
And with the sea-wave and the
wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, com-
bined,
And made harmonious close;
Then, answering from the sandy
shore,
Half drown'd amid the breakers'
roar,
According chorus rose:
Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet St. Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made:

All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,

The stranger sisters roam:
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their
fill,

They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own,

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
How to their house three Barons bold
Must menial service do;

While horns blow out a note of
shame,
And monks cry "Fye upon your
name!

In wrath, for loss of sylvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."—
'This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While labouring on our harbour-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy
hear."—

They told, how in their convent cell
A Saxon Princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfed;

And how, of thousand snakes, each
one

Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray'd;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail
As over Whitby's towers they sail,
And, sinking down, with flutterings
faint,

They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did St. Cuthbert's daughters fail,
To vie with these in holy tale;

His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed, they
told;

How, when the rude Dane burn'd
their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and
moor,

From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse
they bore.

They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it
well,

Nor there his relics might repose;
For, wondrous tale to tell!

In his stone coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides,
Downward to Tilmouth cell.

Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street, and Rippon saw
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw

Hail'd him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last,
Where his cathedral, huge and
vast,

Looks down upon the Wear:
There, deep in Durham's Gothic
shade,

His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,

Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare!
Even Scotland's dauntless king, and
heir,

(Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in
mail,

And the bold men of Teviotdale,)
Before his standard fled.

'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back
again,

When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would
learn

If, on a rock by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his
name:

Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deaden'd clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering
storm

And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.

It was more dark and lone that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell:
Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
A place of burial for such dead,
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reach'd the upper air,
The hearers blessed themselves, and
said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew

Where the place lay; and still more
few

Were those, who had from him the
clew

To that dread vault to go.

Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported
there.

In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls
sprung;

The grave-stones, rudely sculptured
o'er,

Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew-drops fell one by one,
With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
A cresset,* in an iron chain,

Which served to light this drear do-
main,

With damp and darkness seem'd to
strive,

As if it scarce might keep alive;
And yet it dimly served to show
The awful conclave met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
Were placed the heads of convents
three:

All servants of Saint Benedict,
The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay;

In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges
shown

By the pale cresset's ray:
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's there
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
And tear-drops that for pity fell,

She closely drew her veil:
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
By her proud mien and flowing dress,
Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
And she with awe looks pale:
And he, that Ancient Man, whose
sight

Has long been quench'd by age's
night,

Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,

* Antique chandelier.

Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is
shown,

Whose look is hard and stern,—
Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style;
For sanctity call'd, through the isle,
The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
But, though an equal fate they share,
Yet one alone deserves our care.

Her sex a page's dress belied;
The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
Obscured her charms, but could not
hide.

Her cap down o'er her face she
drew;

And, on her doublet breast,
She tried to hide the badge of blue,
Lord Marmion's falcon crest.

But, at the Prioress's command,
A Monk undid the silver band,

That tied her tresses fair,
And raised the bonnet from her
head,

And down her slender form they
spread,

In ringlets rich and rare.

Constance de Beverley they know,
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,
Whom the church number'd with
the dead,

For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to
view,

(Although so palid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistening
fair.)

Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood so calm and
pale,

That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted

That neither sense nor pulse she
lacks,

You might have thought a form of
wax,

Wrought to the very life, was there;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and
foul,

Feels not the import of his deed;
One, whose brute-feeling ne'er as-
pires

Beyond his own more brute desires.
Such tools the Tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds;

For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres
haunt,

One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death,—alone finds place.

This wretch was clad in frock and
cowl,

And shamed not loud to moan and
howl,

His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the
lash;

While his mute partner, standing
near,

Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might
shrick,

Well might her paleness terror speak!
For there were seen in that dark wall,

Two niches, narrow, deep and tall;—
Who enters at such grisly door,

Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.

In each a slender meal was laid,

Of roots, of water, and of bread:

By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motion-
less;

Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Show'd the grim entrance of the
porch:

Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.

Hewn stones and cement were dis-
play'd,

And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired;

Or who, in desperate doubt of
grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface
Of some foul crime the stain ;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still,
As either joy'd in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought
there,
They knew not how, nor knew not
where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom,
On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb,
But stopp'd, because that woful
Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak
essay'd.

Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain;
Her accents might no utterance gain;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seem'd to hear a distant rill—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
For though this vault of sin and
fear

Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak,

By Autumn's stormy sky ;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gather'd
strength,

And arm'd herself to bear.
It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

“ I speak not to implore your grace,
Well know I for one minute's space
Successless might I sue :
Nor do I speak your prayers to gain ;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.—

I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil ;
For three long years I bow'd my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride ;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.—
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith foreswore,
And Constance was belov'd no more.—

'Tis an old tale, and often told ;
But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like
me !

XXVIII.

“ The King approved his favourite's
aim ;
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attants that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they
came,

In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are pray'd,
Their lances in the rest are laid,
They meet in mortal shock ;
And, hark ! the throng, with thun-
dering cry,
Shout ' Marmion, Marmion ! to the
sky,

De Wilton to the block !'
Say ye, who preach Heaven shall de-
cide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here !

When, loyal in his love and faith,
 Wilton found overthrow or death,
 Beneath a traitor's spear?
 How false the charge, how true he fell,
 This guilty packet best can tell."—
 Then drew a packet from her breast,
 Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke
 the rest.

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridle
 staid;
 To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
 The hated match to shun.
 'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry
 cried,
 'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
 If she were sworn a nun.'
 One way remain'd—the King's com-
 mand
 Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
 I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
 For Clara and for me:
 This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
 He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
 And, by his drugs, my rival fair
 A saint in heaven should be.
 But ill the dastard kept his oath,
 Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
 Not that remorse my bosom swells,
 But to assure my soul that none
 Shall ever wed with Marmion.
 Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
 This packet, to the King convey'd,
 Had given him to the headsmen's
 stroke,
 Although my heart that instant
 broke.—
 Now, men of death, work forth your
 will,
 For I can suffer, and be still;
 And come he slow, or come he fast,
 It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI.

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
 Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
 If Marmion's late remorse should
 wake,
 Full soon such vengeance will he take,

That you shall wish the fiery Dane
 Had rather been your guest again.
 Behind, a darker hour ascends!
 The altars quake, the crosier bends,
 The ire of a despotic King
 Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
 Then shall these vaults, so strong
 and deep,

Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
 Some traveller then shall find my
 bones
 Whitening amid disjointed stones,
 And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
 Marvel such relics here should be."

XXXII.

Fix'd was her look, and stern her air:
 Back from her shoulders stream'd
 her hair;
 The locks, that wont her brow to
 shade,
 Stared up erectly from her head;
 Her figure seemed to rise more high;
 Her voice, despair's wild energy
 Had given a tone of prophecy.
 Appall'd the astonish'd conclave sate;
 With stupid eyes, the men of fate
 Gazed on the light inspired form,
 And listen'd for the avenging storm;
 The judges felt the victim's dread,
 No hand was moved, no word was said,
 Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
 Raising his sightless balls to heaven:—
 "Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
 Sinful brother, part in peace!"
 From that dire dungeon, place of
 doom,
 Of execution too, and tomb,
 Paced forth the judges three;
 Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
 The butcher-work that there befell,
 When they had glided from the cell
 Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
 That conclave to the upper day;
 But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
 They heard the shriekings of despair,
 And many a stifled groan:
 With speed their upward way they
 take,

(Such speed as age and fear can make,)
And cross'd themselves for terror's
sake,

As hurrying, tottering on:
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
His beads the wakeful hermit told,
The Bamborough peasant raised his
head,

But slept ere half a prayer he said;
So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind,
Then couch'd him down beside the
hind,
And quaked among the mountain
fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

TO WILLIAM ERSKINE, ESQ.*

Ashesiel, Ettrick Forest.

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's chequer'd scene of joy and
sorrow;

Like streamlet of the mountain
north,

Now in a torrent racing forth,
Now winding slow its silver train,
And almost slumbering on the plain;
Like breezes of the autumn day,
Whose voice inconstant dies away,
And ever swells again as fast,
When the ear deems its murmur past;
Thus various, my romantic theme
Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning
dream.

Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;

* A Judge of the Court of Session, afterwards, by title, Lord Kinnedder. He died in 1822.

Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
Weaving its maze irregular;
And pleased, we listen as the breeze
Heaves its wild sigh through au-
tumn trees;
Then, wild as cloud, or stream, or
gale,
Flow on, flow unconfined, my Tale!

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell
I love the license all too well,
In sounds now lowly, and now strong,
To raise the desultory song?—
Oft, when 'mid such capricious chime,
Some transient fit of lofty rhyme
To thy kind judgment seem'd excuse
For many an error of the muse,
Oft hast thou said, "If, still mis-
spent,

Thine hours to poetry are lent,
Go, and to tame thy wandering
course,
Quaff from the fountain at the source;
Approach those masters, o'er whose
tomb

Immortal laurels ever bloom:
Instructive of the feebler bard,
Still from the grave their voice is
heard;

From them, and from the paths they
show'd,
Choose honour'd guide and practised
road;
Nor ramble on through brake and
maze,
With harpers rude, of barbarous days.

"Or deem'st thou not our later
time

Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
Hast thou no elegiac verse
For Brunswick's venerable hearse?
What, not a line, a tear, a sigh,
When valour bleeds for liberty?—
Oh, hero of that glorious time,
When, with unrivall'd light sub-
lime,—

Though martial Austria, and though
all

The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her
foes—

The star of Brandenburgh arose!

Thou could'st not live to see her beam
For ever quench'd in Jena's stream.
Lamented chief!—it was not given
To thee to change the doom of
Heaven,

And crush that dragon in its birth,
Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
Lamented chief!—not thine the power,
To save in that presumptuous hour,
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatch'd the spear, but left the
shield;

Valour and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
Ill had it seem'd thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For princedoms reft, and scutcheons
riven,
And birthrights to usurpers given;

Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to
feel,
And witness woes thou couldst not
heal!

On thee relenting Heaven bestows
For honour'd life an honour'd close;
And when revolves, in time's sure
change,

The hour of Germany's revenge,
When, breathing fury for her sake,
Some new Arminius shall awake,
Her champion, ere he strike, shall
come,

To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S
tomb.

“Or of the Red-Cross hero* teach,
Dauntless in dungeon as on breach:
Alike to him, the sea, the shore,
The brand, the bridle, or the oar:
Alike to him the war that calls
Its votaries to the shatter'd walls,
Which the grim Turk, besmear'd with
blood,

Against the Invincible made good;
Or that, whose thundering voice
could wake

The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ, and metal'd
Swede,

On the warp'd wave their death-
game play'd;

* Sir Sidney Smith.

Or that, where Vengeance and Af-
fright

How!d round the father of the fight,
Who snatch'd, on Alexandria's sand,
The conqueror's wreath with dying
hand.†

“Or, if to touch such chord be
thine,

Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that wrung
From the wild harp, which silent
hung

By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years roll'd
o'er;

When she, the bold Enchantress †
came,

With fearless hand and heart on
flame!

From the pale willow snatch'd the
treasure,

And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the
grove

With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deem'd their own Shakspeare lived
again.”

Thy friendship thus thy judgment
wronging,

With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest pow-
ers,

Wouldst thou engage my thriftless
hours.

But say, my Erskine, hast thou
weigh'd

That secret power by all obey'd,
Which warps not less the passive
mind,

Its source conceal'd or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth

Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,

And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitlier term'd the sway

Of habit form'd in early day?

Howe'er derived, its force confest
Rules with despotic sway the breast,

† Sir Ralph Abercromby.

† Joanna Baillie.

And drags us on by viewless chain,
 While taste and reason plead in vain.
 Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
 Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
 He seeks not eager to inhale
 The freshness of the mountain gale,
 Content to rear his whiten'd wall
 Beside the dank and dull canal?
 He'll say, from youth he loved to see
 The white sail gliding by the tree.
 Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
 Whose sluggish herds before him
 wind,
 Whose tatter'd plaid and rugged
 cheek
 His northern clime and kindred
 speak;
 Through England's laughing meads
 he goes.
 And England's wealth around him
 flows;
 Ask, if it would content him well,
 At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
 Where hedge-rows spread a verdant
 screen,
 And spires and forests intervene,
 And the neat cottage peeps between?
 No! not for these will he exchange
 His dark Lochaber's boundless range:
 Not for fair Devon's meads forsake
 Bennevis grey, and Garry's lake.

Thus, while I ape the measure wild
 Of tales that charmed me yet a child,
 True though they be, still with the
 chime
 Return the thoughts of early time;
 And feelings, roused in life's first day,
 Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
 Then rise those crags, that mountain
 tower,
 Which charm'd my fancy's wakening
 hour.
 Though no broad river swept along,
 To claim, perchance, heroic song;
 Though sigh'd no groves in summer
 gale,
 To prompt of love a softer tale;
 Though scarce a puny streamlet's
 speed
 Claim'd homage from a shepherd's
 reed;

Yet was poetic impulse given,
 By the green hill and clear blue
 heaven.

It was a barren scene, and wild,
 Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
 But ever and anon between
 Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
 And well the lonely infant knew
 Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
 And honey-suckle loved to crawl
 Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
 I deem'd such nooks the sweetest
 shade

The sun in all its round survey'd;
 And still I thought that shatter'd
 tower*

The mightiest work of human power;
 And marvell'd as the aged hind
 With some strange tale bewitch'd
 my mind,
 Of forayers, who, with headlong
 force,

Down from that strength had spurr'd
 their horse,

Their southern rapine to renew,
 Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
 And, home returning, fill'd the hall
 With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
 Methought that still with trump and
 clang,

The gateway's broken arches rang;
 Methought grim features, seam'd
 with scars,
 Glared through the window's rusty
 bars,

And ever, by the winter hearth,
 Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
 Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
 Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
 Of patriot battles, won of old
 By Wallace wight and Bruce the
 bold;

Of later fields of feud and fight,
 When, pouring from their Highland
 height,

The Scottish clans, in headlong
 sway,
 Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
 While stretch'd at length upon the
 floor,

* Smailholm tower, in Berwickshire:

Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war display'd;
And onward still the Scottish Lion
bore,
And still the scatter'd Southron fled
before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I
trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brighten'd at our evening fire!
From the thatch'd mansion's grey-
hair'd Sire,*
Wise without learning, plain and
good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler
blood;
Whose eye, in age, quick, clear, and
keen,
Show'd what in youth its glance had
been;
Whose doom discording neighbours
sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable Priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could
paint
Alike the student and the saint;
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child,
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caress'd.

For me, thus nurtured, dost thou
ask
The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
Nay, Erskine, nay—On the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish
still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay—Since oft thy
praise
Hath given fresh vigour to my lays;
Since oft thy judgment could refine

* Robert Scott of Sandyknows, the grand-
father of the poet.

My flatten'd thought, or cumbrous
line;
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as
gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrain'd, my
Tale!

CANTO THIRD.

The Hostel, or Inn.

I.

The livelong day Lord Marmion
rode:
The mountain path the Palmer
show'd,
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland
road,
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of
prey,
Had scarcely fail'd to bar their way.
Oft on the trampling band, from
crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd
down;
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock
rose;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow;
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been pass'd before
They gain'd the height of Lammer-
moor;
Thence winding down the northern
way
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.

On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was
graced

With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seem'd large, though
rude;

Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.

Down from their seats the horsemen
sprung,
With jingling spurs the court-yard
rung;

They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call,
And various clamour fills the hall:
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you
gaze;

Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof

Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savoury haunch of deer.

The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand;

Nor wanted, in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,

The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,
And view'd around the blazing hearth.
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deign'd to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,

Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.

Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could
brook,

Strove by a frown to quell;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering
glance,

The Palmer's visage fell.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.

All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,

Thus whisper'd forth his mind:—
"Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such
sight?

How pale his cheek, his eye how
bright,

Whene'er the firebrand's fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl!

Full on our Lord he sets his eye;
For his best palfrey, would not I
Endure that sullen scowl."

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quell'd their hearts,
who saw

The ever-varying fire-light show
That figure stern and face of woe,

Now call'd upon a squire:—
"Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not
some lay,

To speed the lingering night away?
We slumber by the fire."—

VIII.

“So please you,” thus the youth re-
 joined,
 “Our choicest minstrel’s left behind.
 Ill may we hope to please your ear,
 Accustom’d Constant’s strains to hear.
 The harp full deftly can he strike,
 And wake the lover’s lute alike;
 To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
 Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,
 No nightingale her love-lorn tune
 More sweetly warbles to the moon.
 Woe to the cause, whate’er it be,
 Detains from us his melody,
 Lavish’d on rocks, and billows stern,
 Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
 Now must I venture, as I may,
 To sing his favourite roundelay.”

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
 The air he chose was wild and sad;
 Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
 Rise from the busy harvest band,
 When falls before the mountaineer,
 On Lowland plains, the ripen’d ear.
 Now one shrill voice the notes pro-
 long,
 Now a wild chorus swells the song:
 Oft have I listen’d, and stood still,
 As it came soften’d up the hill,
 And deem’d it the lament of men
 Who languish’d for their native glen;
 And thought how sad would be such
 sound
 On Susquehana’s swampy ground,
 Kentucky’s wood-encumber’d brake
 Or wild Ontario’s boundless lake,
 Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
 Recall’d fair Scotland’s hills again!

X.

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
 Whom the fates sever
 From his true maiden’s breast,
 Parted for ever!
 Where, through groves deep and high,
 Sounds the far billow,
 Where early violets die,
 Under the willow,

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.
 There, through the summer day,
 Cool streams are laving;
 There, while the tempests sway,
 Scarce are boughs waving;
 There, thy rest shall thou take,
 Parted for ever,
 Never again to wake,
 Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
 He, the deceiver,
 Who could win maiden’s breast,
 Ruin, and leave her?
 In the lost battle,
 Borne down by the flying,
 Where mingles war’s rattle
 With groans of the dying.

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.
 Her wing shall the eagle flap
 O’er the false-hearted;
 His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
 Ere life be parted.
 Shame and dishonour sit
 By his grave ever;
 Blessings shall hallow it,—
 Never, O never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
 And silence sunk on all around.
 The air was sad; but sadder still
 It fell on Marmion’s ear,
 And plain’d as if disgrace and ill,
 And shameful death, were near.
 He drew his mantle past his face,
 Between it and the band,
 And rested with his head a space,
 Reclining on his hand.
 His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
 That, could their import have been
 seen,

The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wish'd to be their
prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and
force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear, for their scourge, mean villains
have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave!
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they
feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the
smart
Of civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his
head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said,—
"Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul?
Say, what may this portend?"
Then first the Palmer silence broke,
(The livelong day he had not spoke,)
"The death of a dear friend."

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity;
Marmion, whose soul could scantily
brook,
Even from his King, a haughty look;
Whose accent of command controll'd,
In camps, the boldest of the bold—
Thought, look, and utterance failed
him now,
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his
brow;
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook,
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the
wise,

And proudest princes veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter!—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betray'd.
Not that he augur'd of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb:
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid;
And wroth, because in wild despair,
She practised on the life of Clare;
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave;
And deem'd restraint in convent
strange
Would hide her wrongs, and her re-
venge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite
peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear,
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-
gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,
When the stern priests surprised
their prey.
His train but deem'd the favourite
page
Was left behind, to spare his age;
Or other if they deem'd, none dared
To mutter what he thought and heard:
Woe to the vassal, who durst pry
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deem'd her
well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But, waken'd by her favourite lay,
And that strange Palmer's boding say,
That fell so ominous and drear,
Full on the object of his fear,
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose;
And Constance, late betray'd and
scorn'd,
All lovely on his soul return'd;
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,
Crimson'd with shame, with terror
mute,

Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

"Alas!" he thought, "how changed
that mien!

How changed these timid looks have
been,

Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
Have steel'd her brow, and arm'd her
eyes!

No more of virgin terror speaks
The blood that mantles in her cheeks;
Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair;
And I the cause—for whom were
given

Her peace on earth, her hopes in
heaven!—

Would," thought he, as the picture
grows,

"I on its stalk had left the rose!
Oh, why should man's success re-
move

The very charms that wake his love!
Her convent's peaceful solitude
Is now a prison harsh and rude.

And, pent within the narrow cell,
How will her spirit chafe and swell!
How brook the stern monastic laws!
The penance how—and I the cause!

Vigil and scourge—perchance even
worse!"—

And twice he rose to cry, "To
horse!"—

And twice his Sovereign's mandate
came,

Like damp upon a kindling flame;
And twice he thought, "Gave I not
charge

She should be safe, though not at
large?

They durst not, for their island, shred
One golden ringlet from her head."

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom
strove

Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds, whose contending
sway

I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,

Their Host the Palmer's speech had
heard,

And, talkative, took up the word:

"Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who
stray

From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,

Full often learn the art to know

Of future weal, or future woe,

By word, or sign, or star;

Yet might a knight his fortune hear,

If, knight-like, he despises fear,

Not far from hence;—if fathers old

Aright our hamlet legend told."—

These broken words the menials
move,

(For marvels still the vulgar love,)

And, Marmion giving license cold,

His tale the host thus gladly told:—

XIX.

The Host's Tale.

"A clerk could tell what years have
flown

Since Alexander filled our throne,
(Third monarch of that warlike name,)

And eke the time when here he came
To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:

A braver never drew a sword;

A wiser never, at the hour

Of midnightspoke the word of power:

The same, whom ancient records call

The founder of the Goblin-Hall.

I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay

Gave you that cavern to survey.

Of lofty roof, and ample size,

Beneath the castle deep it lies:

To hew the living rock profound,

The floor to pave, the arch to round,

There never toil'd a mortal arm,

It all was wrought by word and charm;

And I have heard my grandsire say,

That the wild clamour and affray

Of those dread artisans of hell,

Who labour'd under Hugo's spell,

Sounded as loud as ocean's war,

Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

"The King Lord Gifford's castle
sought,

Deep labouring with uncertain
thought;

Even then he muster'd all his host,
 To meet upon the western coast :
 For Norse and Danish galleys plied
 Their oars within the frith of Clyde.
 There floated Haco's banner trim,
 Above Norweyan warriors grim,
 Savage of heart, and large of limb ;
 Threatening both continent and isle,
 Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
 Lord Gifford, deep beneath the
 ground,
 Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
 And tarried not his garb to change,
 But, in his wizard habit strange;
 Came forth,—a quaint and fearful
 sight ;
 His mantle lined with fox-skins white ;
 His high and wrinkled forehead bore
 A pointed cap, such as of yore
 Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore :
 His shoes were mark'd with cross
 and spell,
 Upon his breast a pentacle ;
 His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
 Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
 Bore many a planetary sign,
 Combust, and retrograde, and trine ;
 And in his hand he held prepared,
 A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.

“ Dire dealings with the fiendish race
 Had mark'd strange lines upon his
 face ;
 Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
 His eyesight dazzled seem'd and
 dim,
 As one unused to upper day ;
 Even his own menials with dismay
 Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly Sire,
 In his unwonted wild attire ;
 Unwonted, for traditions run,
 He seldom thus beheld the sun.—
 ‘ I know,’ he said—his voice was
 hoarse,
 And broken seem'd its hollow force,—
 ‘ I know the cause, although untold,
 Why the King seeks his vassal's hold :
 Vainly from me my liege would know
 His kingdom's future weal or woe ;
 But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
 His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

“ ‘ Of middle air the demons proud,
 Who ride upon the racking cloud,
 Can read, in fix'd or wandering star,
 The issue of events afar ;
 But still their sullen aid withhold,
 Save when by mightier force con-
 troll'd.
 Such late I summon'd to my hall ;
 And though so potent was the call,
 That scarce the deepest nook of hell
 I deem'd a refuge from the spell,
 Yet, obstinate in silence still,
 The haughty demon mocks my skill.
 But thou—who little know'st thy
 might,
 As born upon that blessed night
 When yawning graves, and dying
 groan,
 Proclaim'd hell's empire over-
 thrown,—
 With untaught valour shalt compel
 Response denied to magic spell.
 ‘ Gramercy,’ quoth our Monarch free,
 ‘ Place him but front to front with
 me,
 And, by this good and honour'd brand,
 The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,
 Soothly I swear that, tide what tide,
 The demon shall a buffet bide.’—
 His bearing bold the wizard view'd,
 And thus, well pleased, his speech
 renew'd :—
 ‘ There spoke the blood of Malcolm !
 mark :
 Forth pacing hence, at midnig'
 dark,
 The rampart seek, whose circling
 crown
 Crests the ascent of yonder down :
 A southern entrance shalt thou find ;
 There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
 And trust thine elfin foe to see,
 In guise of thy worst enemy :
 Couch then thy lance, and spur thy
 steed—
 Upon him, and St. George to speed !
 If he go down, thou soon shalt know
 Whate'er these airy sprites can
 show ;—
 If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
 I am no warrant for thy life.’

XXIII.

“Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
Alone and arm'd, forth rode the King
To that old camp's deserted round :
Sir Knight, you well might mark the
mound,

Left hand the town, — the Pictish race.
The trench, long since, in blood did
trace ;

The moor around is brown and bare,
The space within is green and fair.
The spot our village children know,
For there the earliest wild-flowers
grow ;

But woe betide the wandering wight,
That treads its circle in the night !
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
Gives ample space for full career:
Opposed to the four points of heaven,
By four deep gaps age entrance given.
The southernmost our Monarch past,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast ;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appear'd the form of England's King,
Who then, a thousand leagues afar,
In Palestine waged holy war:
Yet arms like England's did he wield,
Alike the leopards in the shield,
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
The rider's length of limb the same:
Long afterwards did Scotland know,
Fell Edward* was her deadliest foe.

XXIV.

“The vision made our Monarch start,
But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man ;
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor glance,
And razed the skin—a puny wound.
The King, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compell'd the future war to show.
Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war ;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandish'd war-axe wield,
And strike proud Haco from his car,

* Edward I. of England.

While all around the shadowy Kings
Denmark's grim ravens cover'd
their wings.

Tis said, that, in that awful night,
Remoter visions met his sight.
Foreshowing future conquests far,
When our sons' sons wage northern
war ;

A royal city, tower and spire,
Redden'd the midnight sky with fire,
And shouting crews her navy bore,
Triumphant, to the victor shore. †
Such signs may learned clerks ex-
plain,

They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

“The joyful King turn'd home again,
Headed his host, and quell'd the
Dane ;

But yearly, when return'd the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,
His wound must bleed and smart ;
Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start.'

Long since, beneath Dunfermline's
nave,

King Alexander fills his grave,

Our Lady give him rest !

Yet still the knightly spear and
shield

The Elfin Warrior doth wield,

Upon the brown hill's breast ;

And many a knight hath proved his
chance,

In the charm'd ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped ;

Save two, as legends tell, and they
Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert
Hay.—

Gentles, my tale is said.”

XXVI.

The quaighs † were deep, the liquor
strong.

And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign :

† An allusion to the battle of Copenhagen,
1801.

† *Quaigh*, a wooden cup.

And, with their lord, the squires re-
tire;
The rest, around the hostel fire,
Their drowsy limbs recline:
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppress'd with toil and ale, they
snore:
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows
strange.

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were
seen
The foldings of his mantle green:
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will
dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream.
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in
gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding
plume;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he
knew.

XXVIII.

— "Fitz-Eustace! rise, I cannot rest;
You churl's wild legend haunts my
breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my
mood:
The air must cool my feverish blood;
And fain would I ride forth, to see
The scene of Elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy
slaves;
I would not, that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale."—
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,

And, darkling, Marmion's steed ar-
ray'd,
While, whispering, thus the Baron
said:—

XXIX.

"Did'st never, good my youth, hear
tell,
That on the hour when I was born,
Saint George, who graced my sire's
chappelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite:—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves
there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their
ring."
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And mark'd him pace the village
road,
And listen'd to his horse's tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish
camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seem'd, in the squire's
eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom 'twas said he scarce re-
ceived
For gospel, what the church be-
lieved,—
Should, stirr'd by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Array'd in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,

We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,
At distance, prick'd to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
Come town-ward rushing on;
First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village
road,—

In other pace than forth he yode,*
Returned Lord Marmion.
Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, well-nigh he fell;
To the squire's hand the rein he
threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew:
But yet the moonlight did betray,
The falcon-crest was soil'd with clay;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger's knee,
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous
signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene:
Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO
FOURTH.

TO JAMES SKENE, ESQ.†

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

AN ancient Minstrel sagely said,
"Where is the life which late we led?"
That motley clown in Arden wood,
Whom humourous Jacques with envy
view'd,
Not even that clown could amplify,
On this trite text, so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell,
Since we have known each other well;
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand,

* *Yode*, used by old poets for *went*.
† James Skene, Esq., of Rubislaw, Aber-
deenshire.

And sure, through many a varied
scene,
Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep-mark'd, like all
below,
With chequer'd shades of joy and
woe;
Though thou o'er realms and seas
hast ranged,
Mark'd cities lost, and empires
changed,
While here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and
fears,
Fever'd the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months,
but seem,
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now it scarcely seems a day,
Since first I tuned this idle lay;
A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now, November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening
tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow
shore.
Their vex'd boughs streaming to the
sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights, and Ettrick
Pen,
Have donn'd their wintry shrouds
again:
And mountain dark, and flooded
mead,
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mix'd with the rack, the snow mists
fly;
The shepherd, who in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen;—
He who, outstretch'd the livelong day,

At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
View'd the light clouds with vacant
look,
Or slumber'd o'er his tatter'd book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessen'd tide ;—
At midnight now, the snowy plain
Finds sterner labour for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless
sun,
Through heavy vapours dark and dun ;
When the tired ploughman, dry and
warm,

Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
Against the casement's tinkling pane ;
The sounds that drive wild deer, and
fox,

To shelter in the brake and rocks,
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain ;
Till, dark above, and white below
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine ;
Whistling and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid :
His flock he gathers, and he guides,
To open downs, and mountain-sides,
Where fiercest though the tempest
blow,

Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
Stiffens his locks to icicles ;
Oft he looks back, while streaming
far,

His cottage window seems a star,—
Loses its feeble gleam,—and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lag-
ging sheep.

If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale :
His paths, his landmarks, all un-
known,

Close to the hut, no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,

The morn may find the stiffen'd
swain :

The widow sees, at dawning pale,
His orphans raise their feeble wail ;
And, close beside him, in the snow,
Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
Couches upon his master's breast,
And licks his cheek to break his
rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
His healthy fare, his rural cot,
His summer couch by greenwood
tree,

His rustic kirk's* loud revelry,
His native hill-notes, tuned on high,
To Marion of the blithesome eye ;
His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
And all Arcadia's golden creed ?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
Of human life the varying scene ?
Our youthful summer oft we see
Dance by on wings of game and glee,
While the dark storm reserves its
rage,

Against the winter of our age :
As he, the ancient Chief of Troy,
His manhood spent in peace and joy ;
But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
Call'd ancient Priam forth to arms.
Then happy those, since each must
drain

His share of pleasure, share of
pain,—
Then happy those, beloved of
Heaven,

To whom the mingled cup is given :
Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
Whose joys are chasten'd by their
grief.

And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
When thou of late, wert doom'd to
twine,—

Just when thy bridal hour was by,—
The cypress with the myrtle tie.
Just on thy bride her Sire had
smiled,

And bless'd the union of his child,
When love must change its joyous
cheer,

* Scottish harvest-home.

And wipe affection's filial tear.
Nor did the actions next his end,
Speak more the father than the
friend.

Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
The tribute to his Minstrel's shade;
The tale of friendship scarce was
told,

Ere the narrator's heart was cold—
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!
But not around his honour'd urn,
Shall friends alone and kindred
mourn;

The thousand eyes his care had
dried,

Pour at his name a bitter tide;
And frequent falls the grateful dew,
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,
Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
"The widow's shield, the orphan's
stay.

Nor, though it wake thy sorrow,
deem

My verse intrudes on this sad theme;
For sacred was the pen that wrote,
"Thy father's friend forget thou
not:"

And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave:—
'Tis little—but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling
strain

Recalls our summer walks again;
When, doing nought,—and, to speak
true,

Not anxious to find ought to do,—
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And, desultory as our way,
Ranged, unconfined, from grave to
gay.

Even when it flagg'd, as oft will
chance,

No effort made to break its trance,
We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too;
Thou bravely labouring to portray

The blighted oak's fantastic spray;
I spelling o'er, with much delight,
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante by name, yclep'd the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp,* with eyes of fire,
Jealous, each other's motions view'd
And scarce suppress'd their ancient
feud.

The laverock† whistled from the
cloud;

The stream was lively, but not loud;
From the white thorn the May-flow-
er shed

Its dewy fragrance round our head:
Not Ariel lived more merrily
Under the blossom'd bough, than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have
been ours,
When Winter stript the summer's
bowers.

Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and
drear,

When fires were bright, and lamps
beam'd gay,

And ladies tuned the lovely lay;
And he was held a laggard soul,
Who shunn'd to quaff the sparkling
bowl.

Then he, whose absence we deplore,‡
Who breathes the gales of Devon's
shore,

The longer miss'd, bewail'd the more;
And thou, and I, and dear loved R—,§
And one whose name I may not say,—

For not Mimosa's tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than
he,—

In merry chorus well combined,
With laughter drown'd the whistling
wind.

Mirth was within; and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our
shout.

Not but amid the buxom scene

* A favourite bull terrier of Sir Walter's.

† *Laverock*, the lark.

‡ Colin Mackenzie, of Portmore.

§ Sir William Rae, Bart., of St. Catharine's.

Some grave discourse might inter-
vene—

Of the good horse that bore him best,
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest:
For, like mad Tom's* our chiefest
care,

Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.
Such nights we've had; and, though
the game

Of manhood be more sober tame,
And though the field-day, or the drill,
Seem less important now—yet still
Such may we hope to share again.

The sprightly thought inspires my
strain!

And mark, how, like a horseman true,
Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Camp.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
And with their light and lively call,
Brought groom and yeoman to the
stall.

Whistling they came, and free of
heart,

But soon their mood was chang-
ed;

Complaint was heard on every part,
Of something disarranged.

Some clamoured loud for armour lost;
Some brawld and wrangled with the
host;

"By Becket's bones," cried one, "I
fear,

That some false Scot has stolen my
spear!"—

Young Blount, Lord Marmion's sec-
ond squire,

Found his steed wet with sweat and
mire;

Although the rated horse-boy sware,
Last night he dress'd him sleek and
fair.

* Common name for an idiot; assumed by
Edgar in King Lear.

While chafed the impatient squire
like thunder,

Old Hubert shouts, in fear and won-
der,—

"Help, gentle Blount! help, com-
rades all!

Bevis lies dying in his stall:

To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
Of the good steed he loved so well?"

Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw;
Till one, who would seem wisest,
cried—

"What else but evil could betide,
With that cursed Palmer for our
guide?

Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush."

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but
guess'd,

Nor wholly understood,

His comrades' clamorous plaints
suppress'd;

He knew Lord Marmion's mood.

Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy
thought,

And did his tale display

Simply as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.

Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvell'd at the wonders told,—
Pass'd them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the
cost

Had reckon'd with their Scottish
host;

And, as the charge he cast and paid,
"Ill thou deserv'st thy hire," he said:

"Dost see, thou knave, my horse's
plight?

Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!

I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross and blazing
brand,

Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home:

For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trample to and fro."
The laughing host looked on the
hire,—

"Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou comest among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the
blow,

And short the pang to undergo."
Here stay'd their talk,—for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journey'd all the morning day.

IV.

The green-sward way was smooth
and good,
Through Humbie's and through Sal-
toun's wood ;

A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,
There narrower closed, till over head,
A vaulted screen the branches made.
"A pleasant path," Fitz-Eustace said ;
"Such as where errant-knights might
see

Adventures of high chivalry ;
Might meet some damsel flying fast,
With hair unbound and looks aghast ;
And smooth and level course were
here,

In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and
dells ;

And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's
meed."

He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's
mind :

Perchance to show his lore design'd ;

For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton, or De Worde.*

Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in
vain,

For Marmion answer'd nought again.

* William Caxton was the earliest English
printer; born in Kent, A. D. 1412; Wynken
de Worde was his successor.

V.

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolong'd by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far ;

Each ready archer grasp'd his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know,
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the
band,

Some opener ground to gain ;
And scarce a furlough had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, show'd
A little woodland plain.

Just in that advantageous glade,
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets at whose
clang

So late the forest echoes rang ;
On prancing steeds they forward
press'd,

With scarlet mantle, azure vest ;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon
bore:

Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay,
came,

In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glow-
ing,

Attendant on a King-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon
held

That feudal strife had often quell'd,
When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age ;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come ;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home ;
The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And look'd the legs of Rome,

On milk-white palfrey forth he
paced;
His cap of maintenance was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin,
and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device, and
crest,
Embroider'd round and round.
The double treasure might you
see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
So bright the King's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could
note,
In living colours, blazon'd brave,
The Lion, which his title gave;
A train which well beseem'd his
state,
But all unarm'd, around him wait.
Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms!

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion
spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
For well the stately Baron knew
To him such courtesy was due,
Whom royal James himself had
crown'd,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem:
And wet his brow with hallow'd
wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said:—
"Though Scotland's King hath deep-
ly swore
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry
more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court;
Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's
name,

And honours much his warlike
fame,
My liege hath deem'd it shame, and
lack
Of courtesy, to turn him back;
And, by his order, I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide,
Till finds King James meet time to
see
The flower of English chivalry."

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may,
The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
Sought to take leave in vain;
Strict was the Lion-King's command,
That none, who rode in Marmion's
band,
Should sever from the train:
"England has here enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes;"
To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right hand path they now de-
cline,
And trace against the stream the
Tyne.

X.

At length up that wild dale they
wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle crowns
the bank;
For there the Lion's care assigned
A lodging meet for Marmion's
rank.
That Castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne:
And far beneath, where slow they
creep,
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows
weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose;
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI.

Crichtoun! though now thy miry
court

But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and totter'd Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic
sense,

Scutcheons of honour, or pretence,
Quarter'd in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence.

Nor wholly yet had time defaced

Thy lordly gallery fair;
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorn thy ruin'd stair.

Still rises unimpair'd below,
The courtyard's graceful portico;

Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show

Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle
go,

To shield them from the storm.

And, shuddering, still may we explore,
Where oft whilom were captives
pent,

The darkness of the Massy More;

Or, from thy grass-grown battle-
ment,

May trace, in undulating line,
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun show'd,
As through its portal Marmion rode;

But yet 'twas melancholy state

Received him at the outer gate;

For none were in the Castle then,

But women, boys, or aged men.

With eyes scarce dried, the sorrow-
ing dame,

To welcome noble Marmion, came;

Her son, a stripling twelve years old,

Proffer'd the Baron's rein to hold;

For each man that could draw a sword

Had march'd that morning with their
lord,

Earl Adam Hepburn, he who died

On Flodden, by his sovereign's side.

Long may his Lady look in vain!

She ne'er shall see his gallant train,
Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.

'Twas a brave race, before the name
Of hated Bothwell stain'd their fame.

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every rite that honour claims,
Attended as the King's own guest:—

Such the command of Royal James,
Who marshal'd then his land's array,
Upon the Borough-moor that lay.

Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.

Here while they dwelt, did Linde-
say's wit

Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit;

And, in his turn, he knew to prize

Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and
wise.—

Train'd in the lore of Rome and
Greece,

And policies of war and peace.

XIV.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they
walk'd,

And, by the slowly fading light,

Of various topics talked;

And, unaware, the Herald-bard

Said, Marmion might his toil have
spared,

In travelling so far;

For that a messenger from heaven

In vain to James had counsel given

Against the English war;

And, closer question'd, thus he told

A tale, which chronicles of old

In Scottish story have enroll'd:—

XV.

Sir David Lindesay's Tale.

“Of all the palaces so fair,

Built for the royal dwelling,

In Scotland, far beyond compare

Linlithgow is excelling;

And in its park in jovial June,

How sweet the merry linnet's tune,

How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild-buckbells from ferny
brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake,
The saddest heart might pleasure
take

To see all nature gay.

But June is to our sovereign dear
The heaviest month in all the year:
Too well his cause of grief you know,
June saw his father's overthrow.
Woe to the traitors, who could bring
The princely boy against his King!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices as strict as Lent,
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.

"When last this ruthless month was
come,

And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying;
While, for his royal father's soul,
The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
The Bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain—
In Katharine's aisle the Monarch
knelt,

With sackcloth-shirt, and iron belt,
And eyes with sorrow streaming;
Around him in their stalls of state,
The Thistle's Knight-Companions
sate,

Their banners o'er them beaming.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafen'd with the jangling knell,
Was watching where the sunbeams
fell,

Through the stain'd casement
gleaming;

But, while I mark'd what next befell,
It seem'd as I were dreaming.

Stepp'd from the crowd a ghostly
wight,

In azure gown, with cincture white;
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow
hair.—

Now, mock me not, when, good my
Lord,

I pledge to you my knightly word,

That, when I saw his placid grace,
His simple majesty of face,
His solemn bearing, and his pace
So stately gliding on,—
Seem'd to me ne'er did limner paint
So just an image of the Saint,
Who propp'd the Virgin in her faint,—
The loved Apostle John!

XVII.

"He stepp'd before the Monarch's
chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bow'd nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice, but never tone
So thrill'd through vein, and nerve
and bone:—

'My mother sent me from afar,
Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
Woe waits on thine array;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warn'd, beware:
God keep thee as he may!'

The wondering Monarch seem'd
to seek

For answer, and found none;

And when he raised his head to
speak,

The monitor was gone.

The Marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward pass'd;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's
blast,

He vanish'd from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies."

XVIII.

While Lindesay told his marvel
strange,

The twilight was so pale,

He mark'd not Marmion's colour
change,

While listening to the tale;

But, after a suspended pause,
The Baron spoke:—"Of nature's
laws

So strong I held the force,

That never superhuman cause
 Could e'er control their course.
 And, three days since, had judged
 your aim
 Was but to make your guest your
 game.

But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
 What much has changed my sceptic
 creed,

And made me credit aught."—He
 staid,

And seem'd to wish his words unsaid :
 But, by that strong emotion press'd
 Which prompts us to unload our
 breast,

Even when discovery's pain,
 To Lindesay did at length unfold
 The tale his village host had told,

At Gifford, to his train.
 Nought of the Palmer says he there,
 And nought of Constance, or of Clare;
 The thoughts, which broke his sleep,
 he seems

To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
 My burning limbs, and couch'd my
 head :

Fantastic thoughts return'd ;
 And, by their wild dominion led,
 My heart within me burn'd.
 So sore was the delirious goad,
 I took my steed, and forth I rode,
 And, as the moon shone bright and
 cold,

Soon reach'd the camp upon the
 wold.

The southern entrance I pass'd
 through,

And halted, and my bugle blew.
 Methought an answer met my ear,—
 Yet was the blast so low and drear,
 So hollow, and so faintly blown,
 It might be echo of my own.

XX.

"Thus judging, for a little space
 I listen'd, ere I left the place ;

But scarce could trust my eyes,
 Nor yet can think they served me true,
 When sudden in the ring I view,

In form distinct of shape and hue,
 A mounted champion rise.—
 I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
 In single fight, and mix'd affray,
 And ever, I myself may say,
 Have borne me as a knight ;
 But when this unexpected foe
 Seem'd starting from the gulf below,—
 I care not though the truth I show,—
 I trembled with affright ;
 And as I placed in rest my spear,
 My hand so shook for very fear,
 I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

"Why need my tongue the issue tell?
 We ran our course,—my charger
 fell;—

What could he 'gainst the shock of
 hell?—

I roll'd upon the plain.
 High o'er my head, with threatening
 hand,

The spectre shook his naked brand,—
 Yet did the worst remain :

My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
 Not opening hell itself could blast
 Their sight, like what I saw !

Full on his face the moonbeams
 strook,—

A face could never be mistook !
 I knew the stern vindictive look,
 And hell my breath for awe.

I saw the face of one who, fled
 To foreign climes, has long been
 dead,—

I well believe the last ;
 For ne'er, from visor raised, did stare
 A human warrior, with a glare
 So grimly and so ghost.

Thrice o'er my head he shook the
 blade ;

But when to good St. George I pray'd,
 (The first time e'er I ask'd his aid,)

He plunged it in the sheath ;
 And, on his courser mounting light,
 He seem'd to vanish from my sight :
 The moonbeam droop'd, and deepest
 night

Sunk down upon the heath.—

"Twere long to tell what cause I
 have

To know his face, that met me
there,
Call'd by his hatred from the grave,
To cumber upper air :
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy."

XXII.

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount ;
Then, learn'd in story, 'gan recount
Such chance had happ'd of old,
When once, near Norham, there did
fight

A spectre fell of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And train'd him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe,
and plaid,

And fingers, red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.

And yet, whate'er such legends say,
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold,

These midnight terrors vain ;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbor unrepent'd sin."—

Lord Marmion turn'd him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,

Then press'd Sir David's hand,—
But nought, at length, in answer said ;
And here their farther converse staid,
Each ordering that his band

Should bowne them with the rising
day,
To Scotland's camp to take their
way.—

Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode.
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor
stone,

Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore ;
But, passing such digres-ion o'er,
Suffice it that the route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They pass'd the glen and scanty
rill,

And climb'd the opposing bank, until
They gain'd the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford ! on whose uncultured
breast,
Among the broom, and thorn,
and whin,

A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,

While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.

Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain ;

And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming
brook.

To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV.

But different far the change has been,
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown :

Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,
Upland, and dale, and down :—

A thousand did I say ? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were
seen,

That choquer'd all the heath between
The streamlet and the town ;

In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular ;
Of giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with
green :

In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudés, dark with rain,
 To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
 And from the Southern Redswire
 edge,
 To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge;
 From west to east, from south to north,
 Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
 Marmion might hear the mingled hum
 Of myriads up the mountain come;
 The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
 Where chiefs review'd their vassal
 rank,
 And charger's shrilling neigh;
 And see the shifting lines advance,
 While frequent flash'd, from shield
 and lance,
 The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
 The wreaths of failing smoke declare
 To embers now the brands decay'd,
 Where the night-watch their fires had
 made.
 They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
 Full many a baggage cart and wain,
 And dire artillery's clumsy car,
 By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war;
 And there were Borthwick's' Sisters
 Seven,*
 And culverins which France had
 given.
 Ill-omen'd gift! the guns remain
 The conqueror's spoil on Flodden
 plain.

XXVIII.

Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
 A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
 Various in shape, device, and hue,
 Green, sanguine, purple, red, and
 blue,
 Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and
 square,
 Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there
 O'er the pavilions flew.
 Highest and midmost, was descried
 The royal banner floating wide;

* Seven culverins, so called from him who
 cast them.

The staff, a pine-tree, strong and
 straight,
 Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone,
 Which still in memory is shown,
 Yet bent beneath the standard's
 waight
 Whene'er the western wind un-
 roll'd,
 With toil, the huge and cumbrous
 fold,
 And gave to view the dazzling field,
 Where, in proud Scotland's royal
 shield,
 The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape
 bright,—
 He view'd it with a chief's delight,—
 Until within him burn'd his heart,
 And lightning from his eye did part,
 As on the battle-day;
 Such glance did falcon never dart,
 When stooping on his prey.
 "Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
 Thy King from warfare to dissuade
 Were but a vain essay:
 For, by St. George, were that host
 mine,
 Not power infernal nor divine,
 Should once to peace my soul incline,
 Till I had dimm'd their armour's
 shine
 In glorious battle-fray!"
 Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood:
 "Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere
 good,
 That kings would think withal,
 When peace and wealth their land
 has bless'd,
 'Tis better to sit still at rest,
 Than rise, perchance to fall."

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
 For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
 When sated with the martial show
 That peopled all the plain below,
 The wandering eye could o'er it go,
 And mark the distant city glow
 With gloomy splendour red;
 For on the smoke-wreaths, huge
 and slow,

That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre
proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-
cloud.

Such dusky grandeur clothed the
height,

Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the deep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!

But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleam'd a purple amethyst.

Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law:

And, broad between them roll'd,
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.

Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,

And, making demi-volte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward that
would not dare

To fight for such a land?"

The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
Nor Marmion's frown repress'd his
glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they look'd, a flourish
proud,

Where mingled trump and clarion
loud,

And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,

Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells, with distant
chime,

Merrily told the hour of prime,

And thus the Lindesay spoke:

"Thus clamour still the war-notes
when

The king to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to St. Katharine's of Sienne,
Or Chapel of St. Rocque.

To you they speak of martial fame,
But me remind of peaceful game,

When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should
spare,

But strive which foremost might re-
pair

To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

"Nor less," he said,—“when looking
forth,

I view yon Empress of the North
Sit on her hilly throne;

Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers—

Nor less," he said, "I moan,
To think what woe mischance may
bring,

And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant king;

Or with the larum call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst Southern sack and fires to
guard

Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
But not for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure, or cheaply
bought!

Lord Marion, I say nay:
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and
shield,—

But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly
stowre,

That England's dames must weep in
bower,

Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
Led on by such a King.”—

And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,

And there they made a stay.—
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling

His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing,

Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
In the succeeding lay.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO
FIFTH.

TO GEORGE ELLIS, ESQ.*

Edinburgh.

WHEN dark December glooms the
day,

And takes our autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam
throws,

Upon the weary waste of snows,
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard;
When silvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang, in idle trophy, near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and
spear;

When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound, with his length of
limb,

And pointer, now employ'd no more,
Cumber our parlour's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemn'd to rest and feed;
When from our snow-encircled home,
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice
conn'd o'er,

Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
And darkling politician, cross'd,
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering housewife sore com-
plains

Of carriers' snow-impeded wains;
When such the country cheer, I come,
Well pleased, to seek our city home;
For converse, and for books, to change
The Forest's melancholy range,
And welcome, with renew'd delight,
The busy day and social night.

Not here need my desponding
rhyme

Lament the ravages of time,

* The learned editor of the "Specimens of
Ancient English Romances."

As erst by Newark's riven towers,
And Ettrick stripp'd of forest bowers.
True,—Caledonia's Queen is chang-
ed,

Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent,
By bulwark, line, and battlement,
And flanking towers, and laky flood,
Guarded and garrison'd she stood,
Denying entrance or resort,
Save at each tall embattled port;
Above whose arch, suspended, hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
That long is gone,—but not so long
Since, early closed, and opening late,
Jealous revolved the studded gate,
Whose task, from eve to morning tide,
A wicket churlishly supplied.

Stern then, and steel-girt was thy
brow,

Dun-Edin! O, how alter'd now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sit'st, like Empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea.
For thy dark cloud, with umber'd
lower,

That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and
tower,

Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the Championess of old,
In Spenser's magic tale enroll'd,
She, for the charmed spear renown'd,
Which forced each knight to kiss the
ground,—

Not she more changed, when placed
at rest,

What time she was Malbecco's guest,
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When from the corslet's grasp re-
lieved,

Free to the sight her bosom heaved;
Sweet was her blue eye's modest
smile,

Erst hidden by the aventayle;
And down her shoulders graceful
roll'd

Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
They who whilom, in midnight fight,
Had marvell'd at her matchless might,

No less her maiden charms approved,
 But looking liked, and liking loved.
 The sight could jealous pangs beguile,
 And charm Malbecco's cares a while;
 And he, the wandering Squire of
 Dames,

Forgot his Columbella's claims,
 And passion, erst unknown, could gain
 The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;
 Nor durst light Paridel advance,
 Bold as he was, a looser glance.
 She charm'd, at once, and tamed the
 heart,

Incomparable Britomarte!*

So thou, fair City! disarray'd
 Of battled wall, and rampart's aid,
 As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
 Than in that panoply of war.
 Nor deem that from thy fenceless
 throne

Strength and security are flown;
 Still, as of yore, Queen of the North!
 Still canst thou send thy children
 forth.

Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
 Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
 Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
 Thy dauntless voluntary line,
 For fosse and turret proud to stand,
 Their breasts the bulwarks of the land,
 Thy thousands, train'd to martial toil,
 Full red would stain their native soil,
 Ere from thy mural crown there fell
 The slightest knosp, or pinnacle.
 And if it come,—as come it may,
 Dun-Edin! that eventful day,—
 Renown'd for hospitable deed,
 That virtue much with Heaven may
 plead,

In patriarchal times whose care
 Descending angels deign'd to share;
 That claim may wrestle blessings
 down

On those who fight for The Good
 Town,

Destined in every age to be
 Refuge of injured royalty;
 Since first, when conquering York
 arose,

* The Maiden Knight in Spenser's "Fairy Queen," book iii. canto 9.

To Henry meek she gave repose,†
 Till late, with wonder, grief, and
 awe,
 Great Bourbon's relics, sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts!—for, as
 they rise,
 How gladly I avert mine eyes,
 Bodings, or true or false, to change,
 For Fiction's fair romantic range,
 Or for tradition's dubious light,
 That hovers 'twixt the day and
 night:

Dazzling alternately and dim,
 Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
 Knights, squires, and lovely dames
 to see,
 Creation of my fantasy,
 Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
 And make of mists invading men.
 Who loves not more the night of June
 Than dull December's gloomy noon?
 The moonlight than the fog of frost?
 And can we say, which cheats the
 most?

But who shall teach my harp to
 gain

A sound of the romantic strain,
 Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
 Could win the royal Henry's ear,
 Famed Beauclerc call'd, for that he
 loved

The minstrel‡ and his lay approved?
 Who shall these lingering notes re-
 deem,

Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
 Such notes as from the Breton tongue
 Marie§ translated, Blondel sung?—
 O! born, Time's ravage to repair,
 And make the dying muse thy care,
 Who, when his scythe her hoary foe
 Was poisoning for the final blow,
 The weapon from his hand could
 wring,

† Henry VI. of England, who sought refuge in Scotland after the fatal battle of Towton. "The Meek Usurper," see Gray.

‡ Philip de Than.

§ Marie of France, who translated the "Lais" of Brittany into French. She resided at the Court of Henry III. of England, to whom she dedicated her book.

And break his glass, and shear his wing,
 And bid, reviving in his strain,
 The gentle poet live again;
 Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
 An unpedantic moral gay,
 Nor less the dullest theme bid fit
 On wings of unexpected wit;
 In letters as in life approved,
 Example honour'd, and beloved,—
 Dear ELLIS! to the bard impart
 A lesson of thy magic art,
 To win at once the head and heart,—
 At once to charm, instruct and mend,
 My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
 Be long thy pleasing task,—but, O!
 No more by thy example teach,
 —What few can practise, all can preach,—

With even patience to endure
 Lingered disease, and painful cure,
 And boast affliction's pangs subdued
 By mild and manly fortitude.
 Enough, the lesson has been given:
 Forbid the repetition, Heaven!

Come listen, then! for thou hast known,
 And loved the Minstrel's varying tone,
 Who, like his Border sires of old,
 Waked a wild measure rude and bold,
 Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
 With wonder heard the northern strain.

Come listen! bold in thy applause,
 The bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
 And, as the ancient art could stain
 Achievements on the storied pane,
 Irregularly traced and plann'd,
 But yet so glowing and so grand,—
 So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
 Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
 And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
 And all the pomp of chivalry.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Court.

I.

THE rain has left the hills of Braid;
 The barrier guard have open made

(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
 That closed the tented ground;
 Their men the warders backward drew,
 And carried pikes as they rode through,
 Into its ample bound.
 Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
 Upon the Southern band to stare,
 And envy with their wonder rose,
 To see such well-appointed foes;
 Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
 So huge, that many simply thought,
 But for a vaunt such weapons wrought;
 And little deem'd their force to feel,
 Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
 When rattling upon Flodden vale,
 The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
 Glance every line and squadron through;
 And much he marvell'd one small land
 Could marshal forth such various band:
 For men-at-arms were here,
 Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
 Like iron towers for strength and weight,
 On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
 With battle-axe and spear.
 Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
 Practised their chargers on the plain,
 By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,
 Each warlike feat to show,
 To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
 And high curvett, that not in vain
 The sword sway might descend amain
 On foeman's casque below.
 He saw the hardy burghers there
 March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,
 For vizor they wore none,
 Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;

But burnished were their corslets
 bright,
 Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
 Like very silver shone.
 Long pikes they had for standing
 fight,
 Two-handed swords they wore,
 And many wielded mace of weight,
 And bucklers bright they bore.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd
 In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,
 With iron quilted well;
 Each at his back (a slender store)
 His forty days' provision bore,
 As feudal statutes tell.
 His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
 A crossbow there, a hagbut here,
 A dagger-knife, and brand.
 Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,
 As loth to leave his cottage dear,
 And march to foreign strand;
 Or musing, who would guide his steer,
 To till the fallow land.
 Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
 Did aught of dastard terror lie;
 More dreadful far his ire,
 Than theirs, who, scorning danger's
 name,
 In eager mood to battle came,
 Their valour like light straw on flame,
 A fierce but fading fire.

IV.

Not so the Borderer :—bred to war,
 He knew the battle's din afar,
 And joy'd to hear it swell.
 His peaceful day was slothful ease;
 Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could
 please
 Like the loud slogan yell.
 On active steed, with lance and blade,
 The light-arm'd pricker plied his
 trade,—
 Let nobles fight for fame;
 Let vassals follow where they lead,
 Burghers to guard their townships
 bleed,
 But war's the Borderer's game.
 Their game, their glory, their delight,
 To sleep the day, maraud the night,

O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
 Joyful to fight they took their way,
 Scarce caring who might win the day,
 Their booty was secure.
 These, as Lord Marmion's train
 pass'd by,
 Look'd on at first with careless eye,
 Nor marvell'd aught, well taught to
 know

The form and force of English bow.
 But when they saw the Lord array'd
 In splendid arms and rich brocade,
 Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
 "Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
 Canst guess which road they'll home-
 ward ride?—
 O! could we but on Border side,
 By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
 Beset a prize so fair!
 That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
 Might chance to lose his glistering
 hide;
 Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
 Could make a kirtle rare."

V.

Next, Marmion mark'd the Celtic
 race,
 Of different language, form, and face,
 A various race of man;
 Just then the Chiefs their tribes ar-
 ray'd,
 And wild and garish semblance made,
 The chequer'd trews, and belted
 plaid,
 And varying notes the war-pipes
 bray'd,
 To every varying clan;
 Wild through their red or sable hair
 Look'd out their eyes with savage
 stare,
 On Marmion as he pass'd;
 Their legs above the knee were bare;
 Their frame was sinewy, short, and
 spare,
 And harden'd to the blast;
 Of taller race, the chiefs they own
 Were by the eagle's plumage known.
 The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
 Their hairy buskins well supplied;
 The graceful bonnet deck'd their
 head;

Back from their shoulders hung the
plaid;

A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and
strength,

A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but,
O!

Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.

The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.

They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamouring tongues,
as when

The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes be-
twixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they
pass'd,

And reach'd the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and
ward.

Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamp'd, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they
go,

All was alive with martial show:
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang;
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying
pace,

Through street, and lane, and mar-
ket-place,

Bore lance, or casque, or sword;
While burghers, with important face,

Describ'd each new-come lord,
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlook'd the crowded
street;

There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
Such was the King's behest.

Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,
To Marmion and his train;
And when the appointed hour suc-
ceeds,

The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
That night, with wassell, mirth, and
glee;

King James within her princely bow-
er,
Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's pow-
er,

Summon'd to spend the parting hour;
For he had charged, that his array
Should southward march by break
of day.

Well loved that splendid monarch
aye

The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and
light,

The maskers quaint, the pageant
bright,

The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past,
It was his blithest—and his last.

The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the Court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing;
There ladies touch'd a softer string;
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retail'd his jest;
His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts the gallants
vied;

While some, in close recess apart,
Court'd the ladies of their heart,

Nor courted them in vain;
For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious Love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain;

And flinty is her heart, can view

To battle march a lover true—
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mix'd crowd of glee
and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion
came,

While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know.
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doff'd to Marmion bending low,
His broider'd cap and plume.
For royal was his garb and mien,
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
Trimm'd with the fur of martin
wild;

His vest of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's
crown,

The thistle brave, of old renown:
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldrick bright;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was button'd with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had
seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The monarch's form was middle size;
For feat of strength, or exercise,
Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye,
His short curl'd beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And, oh! he had that merry glance,
That seldom lady's heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and
sue;—
Suit lightly won, and short-lived
pain,

For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
I said he joy'd in banquet bower;

But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often
strange,
How suddenly his cheer would
change,

His look o'ercast and lower,
If, in a sudden turn, he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance
pain,

In memory of his father slain.
Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o'er
Forward he rush'd, with double glee,
Into the stream of revelry:

Thus, dim-seen object of affright
Startles the courser in his flight,
And half he halts, half springs aside;
But feels the quickening spur ap-
plied,

And, straining on the tighten'd rein,
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and
plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held
sway;

To Scotland's Court she came,
To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cressford's gallant heart had
gor'd,

And with the King to make accord,
Had sent his lovely dame.

Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay King allegiance own;

For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and
love,

For her to break a lance;
And strike three strokes with Scot-
tish brand,

And march three miles on Southron
land,

And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.

And thus, for France's Queen he drest
his manly limbs in mailed vest;
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost counsels still to share;
And thus for both, he madly plann'd
The ruin of himself and land!

And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
Were worth one pearl drop, bright
and sheen,

From Margaret's eyes that fell,—
His own Queen Margaret, who, in
Lithgow's bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil:—
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while
Dame Heron rises with a smile

Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touch'd and tuned them all,
Even her bosom's rise and fall

Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the

King,
And then around the silent ring;
And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did
say,

Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not
play!

At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung:—

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

Lady Heron's Song.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of
the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed
was the best;

And save his good broadsword he
weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all
alone.

So faithful in love, and so dauntless in
war,

There never was knight like the young
Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd
not for stone,

He swam the Eske river where ford
there was none;

But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant
came late;

For a laggard in love, and a dastard
in war,

Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave
Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen,
and brothers, and all:

Then spoke the bride's father, his
hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said
never a word,)

“O come ye in peace here, or come
ye in war,

Or to dance at our bridal, young
Lord Lochinvar?”—

“I long woo'd your daughter, my
suit you denied;—

Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs
like its tide—

And now am I come, with this lost
love of mine,

To lead but one measure, drink one
cup of wine.

There are maidens in Scotland more
lovely by far,

That would gladly be bride to the
young Lochinvar.

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the
knight took it up,

He quaff'd off the wine, and he
threw down the cup.

She look'd down to blush, and she
look'd up to sigh,

With a smile on her lips, and a tear
in her eye.

He took her soft hand, ere her mo-
ther could bar,—

“Now tread we a measure!” said
young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely
her face,

That never a hall such a galliard did
grace;

While her mother did fret, and her
father did fume,

And the bridegroom stood dangling
his bonnet and plume;

And the bride-maidens whisper'd,
"Twere better by far,

To have match'd our fair cousin with
young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one
word in her ear,

When they reach'd the hall-door, and
the charger stood near;

So light to the croupe the fair lady
he swung,

So light to the saddle before her he
sprung!

"She is won! we are gone, over
bank, bush, and scaur;

They'll have fleet steeds that follow,"
quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes
of the Netherby clan;

Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves,
they rode and they ran:

There was racing and chasing, on
Cannobie Lee,

But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er
did they see.

So daring in love, and so dauntless
in war,

Have ye e'er heard of gallant like
young Lochinvar?

XIII.

The Monarch o'er the siren hung

And beat the measure as she sung;

And, pressing closer, and more near,

He whisper'd praises in her ear.

In loud applause the courtiers vied;

And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside.

The witching dame to Marmion
threw

A glance, where seem'd to reign

The pride that claims applauses
due,

And of her royal conquest too,

A real or feign'd disdain:

Familiar was the look, and told,

Marmion and she were friends of old.

The King observed their meeting
eyes,

With something like displeas'd sur-
prise;

For monarchs ill can rivals brook,

Even in a word, or smile, or look.

Straight took he forth the parchment
broad,

Which Marmion's high commission
show'd:

"Our Borders sack'd by many a
raid,

Our peaceful liege-men robb'd," he
said:

"On day of truce our Warden slain,

Stout Barton kill'd, his vassals ta'en—

Unworthy were we here to reign,

Should these for vengeance cry in
vain;

Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,

Our herald has to Henry borne."

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas
stood,

And with stern eye the pageant
view'd:

I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,

Who coronet of Angus bore,

And, when his blood and heart were
high,

Did the third James in camp defy,

And all his minions led to die

On Lauder's dreary flat;

Princes and favourites long grew
tame,

And trembled at the homely name

Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;

The same who left the dusky vale

Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,

Its dungeons, and its towers,

Where Bothwell's turrets brave the
air,

And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,

To fix his princely bowers.

Though now, in age, he had laid down

His armour for the peaceful gown

And for a staff his brand,

Yet often would flash forth the fire,

That could, in youth, a monarch's ire

And minion's pride withstand;

And even that day, at council board,

Unapt to soothe his sovereign's
mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.

XV.

His giant-form, like ruin'd tower,
Though fall'n its muscles' brawny
vaunt,

Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and
gaunt,

Seem'd o'er the gaudy scene to lower:
His locks and beard in silver grew;
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood
His bitter speech he thus pursued:

"Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay,
While slightest hopes of peace remain,

Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
To say—Return to Lindisfarne,

Until my herald come again.—
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;
Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
A chief unlike his sires of old.

He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon o'er his towers display'd;
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
More than to face his country's foes.
And, I bethink me, by St. Stephen,

But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first fruits of the war,
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,

A bevy of the maids of Heaven.
Under your guard, these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,
And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem for Cochran's soul may say."
And, with the slaughter'd favourite's
name,

Across the Monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse and shame.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak;
His proud heart swell'd well nigh to
break;

He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
A burning tear there stole.

His hand the Monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not
brook:

"Now, by the Bruce's soul,
Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,

I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true:

Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whisper'd to the King aside:

"Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed!
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart:
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye!"

XVII.

Displeas'd was James, that stranger
view'd
And tamper'd with his changing mood.
"Laugh those that can, weep those
that may,"

Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
"Southward I march by break of day;
And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall."—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt:
"Much honour'd were my humble
home,

If in its halls King James should come;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshiremen are stern of mood;
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby Hills the paths are steep;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the
Trent,

Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet
you may!"—

The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
 And to his nobles loud did call,—
 "Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a
 hall!"*
 Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
 And led Dame Heron gallantly;
 And minstrels, at the royal order,
 Rung out "Blue Bonnets o'er the
 Border."

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
 What to St. Hilda's maids befell,
 Whose galley, as they sail'd again
 To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
 Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
 Till James should of their fate decide;
 And soon, by his command,
 Were gently summon'd to prepare
 To journey under Marmion's care,
 As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
 Again to English land.
 The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
 Nor knew which saint she should
 implore;
 For, when she thought of Constance,
 sore

She fear'd Lord Marmion's mood.
 And judge what Clara must have felt!
 The sword, that hung in Marmion's
 belt,

Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
 Unwittingly, King James had given,
 As guard to Whitby's shades,
 The man most dreaded under Heaven
 By these defenceless maids:
 Yet what petition could avail,
 Or who would listen to the tale
 Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
 'Mid bustle of a war begun?
 They deem'd it hopeless to avoid
 The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
 To Marmion's, as their guardian,
 join'd;
 And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
 The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
 Who warn'd him by a scroll,
 She had a secret to reveal,

*The ancient cry to make room for a
 dance or pageant.

That much concern'd the Church's
 weal,
 And health of sinner's soul,
 And, with deep charge of secrecy,
 She nam'd a place to meet,
 Within an open balcony,
 That hung from dizzy pitch and high,
 Above the stately street;
 To which, as common to each home,
 At night they might in secret come.

XX.

At night, in secret, there they came,
 The Palmer and the holy Dame.
 The moon among the clouds rose high,
 And all the city hum was by.
 Upon the street, where late before
 Did din of war and warriors roar,
 You might have heard a pebble fall,
 A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
 An owl flap his boding wing
 On Giles's steeple tall.
 The antique buildings, climbing
 high,
 Whose Gothic frontlets sought the
 sky.

Were here wrapt deep in shade;
 There on their brows the moon-
 beam broke,
 Through the faint wreaths of silvery
 smoke,
 And on the casements play'd.
 And other light was none to see,
 Save torches gliding far,
 Before some chieftain of degree,
 Who left the royal revelry
 To bowne him for the war.—
 A solemn scene the Abbess chose;
 A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.

"O, holy Palmer!" she began,—
 "For sure he must be sainted man,
 Whose blessed feet have trod the
 ground
 Where the Redeemer's tomb is
 found,—
 For His dear Church's sake, my tale
 Attend, nor deem of light avail,
 Though I must speak of worldly
 love,—

How vain to those who wed above!—
 De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd

Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood ;
 (Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
 To say of that same blood I came;)
 And once, when jealous rage was
 high,

Lord Marmion said despiteously,
 Wilton was traitor in his heart,
 And had made league with Martin
 Swart,

When he came here on Simnel's part;
 And only cowardice did restrain
 His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
 And down he threw his glove:—the
 thing

Was tried, as wont, before the King;
 Where frankly did De Wilton own,
 That Swart in Gueldres he had
 known;

And that between them then there
 went

Some scroll of courteous compliment.
 For this he to his castle sent;
 But when his messenger return'd,
 Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd!
 For in his packet there were laid
 Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
 And proved King Henry's cause be-
 tray'd.

His fame, thus blighted, in the field
 He strove to clear, by spear and
 shield;—

To clear his fame in vain he strove,
 For wondrous are His ways above!
 Perchance some form was unob-
 served;

Perchance in prayer, or faith, he
 swerved;

Else how could guiltless champion
 quail,

Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII.

“His squire, who now De Wilton
 saw

As recreant doom'd to suffer law,
 Repentant, own'd in vain,
 That, while he had the scrolls in care,
 A stranger maiden, passing fair,
 Had drench'd him with a beverage
 rare;

His words no faith could gain.
 With Clare alone he credence won,

Who, rather than wed Marmion,
 Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
 To give our house her livings fair
 And die a vestal vot'ress there.
 The impulse from the earth was
 given,

But bent her to the paths of heaven.
 A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
 Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,
 No, not since Saxon Edelfled;

Only one trace of earthly strain,
 That for her lover's loss
 She cherishes a sorrow vain,
 And murmurs at the cross.—
 And then her heritage;—it goes
 Along the bank of Tame;
 Deep fields of grain the reaper
 mows,

In meadows rich the heifer lows,
 The falconer and huntsman knows
 Its woodlands for the game.

Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
 And I, her humble vot'ress here,
 Should do a deadly sin,
 Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
 If this false Marmion such a prize

By my consent should win;
 Yet hath our boisterous monarch
 sworn

That Clare shall from our house be
 torn,

And grievous cause have I to fear
 Such mandate doth Lord Marmion
 bear.

XXIII.

“Now, prisoner, helpless, and be-
 tray'd

To evil power, I claim thine aid,
 By every step that thou hast trod
 To holy shrine and grotto dim,
 By every martyr's tortured limb,
 By angel, saint, and seraphim,
 And by the Church of God!

For mark:—when Wilton was be-
 tray'd,

And with his squire* forged letters
 laid,

She was, alas! that sinful maid,
 By whom the deed was done, —

O! shame and horror to be said!
 She was a perjured nun!

No clerk in all the land, like her,
Traced quaint and varying character.
Perchance you may a marvel deem,
That Marmion's paramour
(For such vile thing she was) should
scheme

Her lover's nuptial hour;
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
As privy to his honour's stain,
Illimitable power:
For this she secretly retain'd
Each proof that might the plot re-
veal,
Instructions with his hand and
seal;
And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,
Through sinner's perfidy impure,
Her house's glory to secure,
And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV.

"Twere long, and needless, here to
tell,
How to my hand these papers fell;
With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
Who knows what outrage he might do
While journeying by the way?—
O, blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or by land or main,
Deep penance may I pay!—
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And O! with cautious speed,
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the King:
And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
A weekly mass shall still be thine,
While priests can sing and read.—
What ails't thou?—Speak!" for as he
took
The charge, a strong emotion shook
His frame; and, ere reply,
They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown,
That on the breeze did die;
And loud the Abbess shriek'd in fear,
"Saint Withold, save us!" What is
here?

Look at yon City Cross!
See on its battled tower appear
Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to
rear,
And blazon'd banners toss!"

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,
Rose on a turret octagon;
(But now is razed that monument,
Whence royal edict rang,
And voice of Scotland's law was sent
In glorious trumpet-clang,
O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
Upon its dull destroyer's head!
A minstrel's malison,* is said.)
Then on its battlements they saw
A vision, passing nature's law,
Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
Figures that seem'd to rise and die,
Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
While nought confirm'd could ear or
eye
Discern of sound or mien.
Yet darkly did it seem, as there
Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,
With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
A summons to proclaim;
But indistinct the pageant proud,
As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
When flings the moon upon her
shroud
A wavering tinge of flame;
It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
From midmost of the spectre crowd,
This awful summons came:—

XXVI.

"Prince, prelate, potentate, and
peer,
Whose names I now shall call,
Scottish or foreigner, give ear;
Subjects of him who sent me here,
At his tribunal to appear,
I summon one and all:
I cite you by each deadly sin,
That e'er hath soil'd your hearts
within:
I cite you by each brutal lust,
That e'er defil'd your earthly dust,—
By wrath, by pride, by fear,

* Curse.

By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave, and dying groan !
When forty days are pass'd and gone,
I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
To answer and appear."

Then thunder'd forth a roll of names:
The first was thine, unhappy James !

Then all thy nobles came ;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Ar-
gyle,

Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox,
Lyle,—

Why should I tell their separate
style?

Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage
pile,

Was cited there by name ;
And Marmion, Lord of Pentenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scriverbaye ;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did
say.—

But then another spoke :
"Thy fatal summons I deny,
And thine infernal Lord defy,
Appealing me to Him on High,
Who burst the sinner's yoke."

At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream,
The summoner was gone.

Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell ;
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.

She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,
What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth
move,

Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love,

To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair—

Where is the Palmer now? and where
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?—
Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair

They journey in thy charge:

Lord Marmion rode on his right
hand,

The Palmer still was with the band;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
That none should roam at large.

But in that Palmer's altered mien,
A wondrous change might now be seen,
Freely he spoke of war,

Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land;
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
Some desperate deed afar.

His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride.

Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there
came,

By Eustace govern'd fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion
sought;

Ever he fear'd to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.

His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fann'd by looks and
sighs,

And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He long'd to stretch his wide com-
mand

O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
Besides, when Wilton with him viod,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,

Yet conquest by that meanness won
He almost loath'd to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause,
Which made him burst through hon-
our's laws.

If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause awhile,
Before a venerable pile,*

Whose turrets view'd, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.
At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable Dame,
And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honour'd guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thank'd the Scottish Prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that pass'd be-
tween.

O'erjoy'd the nuns their palfreys
leave;

But when fair Clara did intend,
Likethem, from horseback to descend,

Fitz-Eustace said,—“I grieve,
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part;—

Think not discourtesy,
But lords' commands must be obey'd;
And Marmion and the Douglas said,
That you must wend with me.

Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,
Commanding that, beneath his care,
Without delay, you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-
Clare.”

XXX.

The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd;
But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,
Grew pale as death, and cold as
lead,—

She deem'd she heard her death-
doom read.

“Cheer thee, my child!” the Ab-
bess said,

“They dare not tear thee from my
hand,

To ride alone with armed band.”

“Nay, holy mother, nay,”

Fitz-Eustace said, “the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus' care,
In Scotland while we stay;

And, when we move, an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide

Befitting Gloster's heir:
Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,

To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy

That e'en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman's halls.”

He spoke, and blush'd with earnest
grace;

His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare's worst fear relieved.

The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threaten'd, grieved;

To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd,
Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,
And call'd the Prioress to aid,

To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistercian shook:
“The Douglas, and the King,” she
said,

“In their commands will be obey'd;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can
fall

The maiden in Tantallon hall.”

XXXI.

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—

For much of state she had,—
Composed her veil, and raised her
head,

And—“Bid,” in solemn voice she
said,

“Thy master, bold and bad,
The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written
see,

That one of his own ancestry
Drove the monks forth of Coven-
try,

Bid him his fate explore!

Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
His charger hurl'd him to the dust,

* A convent of Cistercian nuns, founded by the Earl of Fife in 1216.

And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.

God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
He is a Chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse:

Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise:

For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
The mighty in his sin,

And Jael thus, and Deborah,"—

Here hasty Blount broke in:

"Fitz-Eustace, we must march our
band,

St. Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand

All day, with bonnet in thy hand,

To hear the lady preach?

By this good light! if thus we stay,

Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,

Will sharper sermon teach.

Come, don thy cap, and mount thy
horse;

The Dame must patience take per-
force."—

XXXII.

"Submit we then to force," said
Clare,

"But let this barbarous lord despair
His purposed aim to win;

Let him take living, land, and life:

But to be Marmion's wedded wife

In me were deadly sin:

And if it be the King's decree

That I must find no sanctuary,

In that inviolable dome,

Where even a homicide might come,

And safely rest his head,

Though at its open portals stood,

Thirsting to pour forth blood for
blood,

The kinsmen of the dead;

Yet one asylum is my own

Against the dreaded hour;

A low, a silent, and a lone,

Where kings have little power.

One victim is before me there.—

Mother, your blessing, and in prayer,

Remember your unhappy Clare!"

Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows

Kind blessings many a one:

Weeping and wailing loud arose,

Round patient Clare, the clamorous
woes

Of every simple nun.

His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight
could bide.

Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And, by each courteous word and
deed,

To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had
rode,

When o'er a height they pass'd,
And, sudden, close before them
show'd

His towers, Tantallon vast;
Broad, massive, high, and stretching
far,

And held impregnable in war.
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean
flows,

The fourth did battled walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.

By narrow drawbridge, outworks
strong,

Through studded gates, an entrance
long,

To the main court they cross.

It was a wide and stately square:
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,

And towers of various form,
Which on the court projected far,
And broke its lines quadrangular.

Here was square keep, there turret
high,

Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence oft the warder could descry
The gathering ocean storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest,—the princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair?

Or why the tidings say,
Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts or fleeter fame,

With every varying day?
And, first they heard King James had
won

Etall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.

At that sore marvell'd Marmion;—
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand

Would soon subdue Northumberland:

But whisper'd news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Hieron's wily dame.—

Such acts to chronicles I yield;
Go seek them there, and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history.—

At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,

Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gather'd in the Southern land,
And march'd into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooler ta'en.

Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe, and swear:—

“A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,

When such a field is near!
Needs must I see this battle-day:
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away!
The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy:
No longer in his halls I'll stay.”
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

TO RICHARD HEBER, ESQ.

Mertoun-House, Christmas.

HEAP on more wood!—the wind is chill;

But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deem'd the new-born year

The fittest time for festal cheer :

Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane,
At Iol more deep the mead did drain;

High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes deck'd the wall

They gorged upon the half dress'd steer;

Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown

The half-gnaw'd rib and marrow-bone:

Or listen'd all, in grim delight,
While Scalds yell'd out the joys of fight.

Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While, wildly-loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,

As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,

And brought blithe Christmas back again,

With all his hospitable train.

Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;

On Christmas-eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas-eve the mass was sung:

That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.

The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holy green;

Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.

Then open'd wide the Baron's hall

To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;

Power laid his rod of rule aside,

And Ceremony doff'd his pride.

The heir, with roses in his shoes,

That night might village partner choose;

The lord, underogating, share

The vulgar game of “post and pair.”*

* An old game at cards.

All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd til it shone, the day to grace,

Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's head frown'd
on high,

Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell;

What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.

There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;

Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,
At such high-tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roar'd with blithesome din;

If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see

Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirt supplied the masquerade,
And smutt'd cheeks the visors made;
But, O! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.

'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;

'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;

A Christmas gambol oft could cheer

The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger, in our northern clime,
Some remnants of the good old time;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetch'd claim

To Southron ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,

Is warmer than the mountain-stream.*
And thus, my Christmas still I hold
Where my great grandsire came of old,

With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air—
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:

Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast,
That he was loyal to his cost;
The banish'd race of kings revered,
And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
Is with fair liberty combined;
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,

And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame that rules the land.
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer,
Speed on their wings the passing year.

And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,

When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,

As loath to leave the sweet domain,
And holds his mirror to her face,
And clips her with a close embrace:—
Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
And as reluctant turn us home.

* "Blood is warmer than water."

How just that, at this time of glee,
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to
thee!

For many a merry hour we've known,
And heard the chimes of midnight's
tone.

Cease, then, my friend! a moment
cease,

And leave these classic tomes in peace!
Of Roman and of Grecian lore,
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
These ancients, as Noll Bluff might
say,

"Were pretty fellows in their day;"
But time and tide o'er all prevail—
On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
Of wonder and of war—"Profane!
What! leave the lofty Latian strain,
Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
To hear the clash of rusty arms:
In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
To jostle conjurer and ghost,
Goblin and witch!"—Nay, Heber
dear,

Before you touch my charter, hear:
Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
My cause with many-languaged lore,
This may I say:—in realms of death
Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith*;
Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
The ghost of murder'd Polydore;
For omens, we in Livy cross,
At every turn, *locutus Bos*.
As grave and duly speaks that ox,
As if he told the price of stocks;
Or held, in Rome republican,
The place of common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
Their legends wild of woe and fear.
To Cambria look—the peasant see,
Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
And shun "the spirit's Blasted
Tree."*

The Highlander, whose red claymore
The battle turn'd on Maida's shore,
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If ask'd to tell a fairy tale:

* Alluding to the Welsh tradition of Howel Sell and Owen Glendwr. Howel fell in single combat against Glendwr, and his body was concealed in a hollow oak,

He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
Who leaves that day his grassy ring:
Invisible to human ken,
He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
Beneath the towers of Franchémont,
Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
A mighty treasure buried lay,
Amass'd through rapine and through
wrong

By the last Lord of Franchémont.
The iron chest is bolted hard,
A huntsman sits, its constant guard;
Around his neck his horn is hung,
His hanger in his belt is slung;
Before his feet his blood-hounds lie.
And 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
Whose withering glance no heart can
brook,

As true a huntsman doth he look,
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,
Or ever holloo'd to a hound.
To chase the fiend, and win the prize
In that same dungeon ever tries
An aged necromantic priest;
It is an hundred years at least,
Since 'twixt them first the strife be-
gun,

And neither yet has lost nor won.
And oft the Conjurer's words will
make

The stubborn Demon groan and quake;
And oft the bands of iron break.
Or bursts one lock, that still amain,
Fast as 'tis open'd, shuts again.
That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the adept shall learn to tell
The very word that clench'd the spell,
When Franch'mont lock'd the treas-
ure cell.

An hundred years are pass'd and
gone,

And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie say;
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from Heaven,

That warn'd, in Lithgow, Scotland's
King,

Nor less the infernal summoning;
May pass the Monk of Durham's tale,
Whose demon fought in Gothic mail;
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
But why such instances to you,
Who, in an instant, can renew
Your treasured hoards of various lore,
And furnish twenty thousand more;
Hoards, not like theirs whose vol-
umes rest

Like treasures in the Franch'mont
chest,

While gripple owners still refuse
To others what they cannot use;
Give them the priest's whole century,
They shall not spell you letters three;
Their pleasure in the books the same
The magpie takes in pilfer'd gem.
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart;
Yet who of all who thus employ them,
Can like the owner's self enjoy
them?—

But, hark! I hear the distant drum!
The day of Flodden Field is come.—
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
And store of literary wealth.

CANTO SIXTH.

The Battle.

I.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanour, changed and
cold,

Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold.
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuff'd the battle from afar;
And hopes were none, that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day;
Whilst these things were, the mourn-
ful Clare

Did in the Dame's devotions share:
For the good Countess ceaseless
pray'd

To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to
mass,

And all in high Baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified;—
Yet as Lord Marmion nothing press'd
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthen'd
prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repell'd the insult of the air,
Which, when the tempest vex'd the
sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whis-
tling by.

Above the rest, a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the Field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access
where

A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extend-
ing,

Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-
coign;

Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement;
The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works, and walls, were strongly
mann'd;

No need upon the sea-girt side;
The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
Approach of human step denied;

And thus these lines and ramparts
rude,
Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry;
Or slow, like noontide ghost, would
glide

Along the dark-grey bulwarks' side;
And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.

Oft did the cliff and swelling main,
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,
A home she ne'er might see again;

For she had laid adown,
So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
And frontlet of the cloister pale,
And Benedictine gown:

It were unseemly sight, he said,
A novice out of convent shade.—
Now her bright locks, with sunny
glow,

Again adorn'd her brow of snow;
Her mantle rich, whose borders,
round,

A deep and fretted broidery bound,
In golden foldings sought the ground;
Of holy ornament, alone
Remain'd a cross with ruby stone;

And often did she look
On that which in her hand she
bore,

With velvet bound, and broider'd o'er,
Her breviary book.

In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale, or twilight dim,

It fearful would have been
To meet a form so richly dress'd,
With book in hand, and cross on
breast,

And such a woeful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practise on the gull and crow,
Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
And did by Mary swear,—
Some love-lorn Fay she might have
been,

Or, in Romance, some spell-bound
Queen;

For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing, thought—"The Ab-
bess, there,

Perchance, does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
Walks hand in hand with Charity;
Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery;
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.

O! wherefore, to my duller eye,
Did still the Saint her form deny!
Was it, that, sear'd by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low,
With him, that taught them first to
glow?

Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild com-
mand,

That ruled thy simple maiden band.
How different now! condemn'd to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's
pride.—

But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
That constant mind, and hate of
wrong,

Descended to a feeble girl,
From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's
Earl:

Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
He ne'er shall bend, although he
break.

V.

"But see! what makes this armour
here?"—

For in her path there lay
Targe, corslet, helm;—she view'd
them near.—

"The breast-plate pierced!—Ay,
much I fear,
Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foe-
man's spear,

That hath made fatal entrance here,
As these dark blood-gouts say.—
Thus Wilton!—Oh! not corslet's ward,
Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
On yon disastrous day!"—

She raised her eyes in mournful
mood,—

WILTON himself before her stood!
It might have seem'd his passing
ghost,

For every youthful grace was lost;
And joy unwonted, and surprise,
Gave their strange wildness to his
eyes.—

Expect not, noble dames and lords,
That I can tell such scene in woods:
What skilful limner e'er would choose
To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
Unless to mortal it were given
To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
Far less can my weak line declare

Each changing passion's shade;
Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy, with her angelic air,
And hope, that paints the future fair,

Their varying hues display'd:
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blend-
ing,

Till all, fatigued, the conflict yield,
And mighty Love retains the field.
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delay'd,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply:—

VI.

De Wilton's History.

"Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.

Thence dragg'd,—but how I can-
not know,

For sense and recollection fled,—
I found me on a pallet low,

Within my ancient beadsman's
shed.

Austin,—remember'st thou, my
Clare,

How thou didst blush, when the old
man,

When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless
pair?—

Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their
sway.

But far more needful was his care,
When sense return'd to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance
wrought,

With him I left my native strand,
And, in a palmer's weeds array'd,
My hated name and form to shade,

I journey'd many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.

Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.

My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon:
And, while upon his dying bed,

He begg'd of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquer'd
lie,

Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

"Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.

Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perish'd of my wound,

None cared which tale was true;
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his Palmer's dress;
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimm'd my shaggy beard and
head,

I scarcely know me in the glass.
A chance most wondrous did provide,

That I should bethat Baron's guide—
 I will not name his name!—
 Vengeance to God alone belongs;
 But, when I think on all my wrongs,
 My blood is liquid flame!
 And ne'er the time shall I forget,
 When, in a Scottish hostel set,
 Dark looks we did exchange:
 What were his thoughts I cannot tell;
 But in my bosom muster'd Hell
 Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

“A word of vulgar augury,
 That broke from me, I scarce knew
 why,
 Brought on a village tale;
 Which wrought upon his moody
 sprite,
 And sent him armed forth by night.
 I borrow'd steed and mail,
 And weapons, from his sleeping band;
 And, passing from a postern door,
 We met, and 'counter'd hand to
 hand,—
 He fell on Gifford moor.
 For the death-stroke my brand I drew,
 (O then my helmed head he knew,
 The Palmer's cowl was gone.)
 Then had three inches of my blade
 The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
 My hand the thought of Austin staid,
 I left him there alone.—
 O good old man! even from the grave
 Thy spirit could thy master save:
 If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
 Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
 Given to my hand this packet dear,
 Of power to clear my injured fame,
 And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
 Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
 Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
 That broke our secret speech—
 It rose from the infernal shade,
 Or featly was some juggle play'd,
 A tale of peace to teach.
 Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
 When my name came among the rest.

IX.

“Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
 To Douglas late my tale I told,

To whom my house was known of
 old.
 Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
 This eve anew shall dub me knight.
 These were the arms that once did
 turn
 The tide of fight on Otterburne,
 And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
 When the Dead Douglas won the
 field.*
 These Angus gave—his armourer's
 care,
 Ere morn shall every breach repair;
 For nought, he said, was in his halls,
 But ancient armour on the walls,
 And aged chargers in the stalls,
 And women, priests, and grey-hair'd
 men;
 The rest were all in Twisel glen.†
 And now I watch my armour here,
 By law of arms, till midnight's near;
 Then, once again a belted knight,
 Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of
 light.

X.

“There soon again we meet, my
 Clare!
 This Baron means to guide thee there:
 Douglas reveres his King's command,
 Else would he take thee from his
 band.
 And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
 Will give De Wilton justice due.
 Now meeter far for martial broil,
 Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
 Once more”—“O Wilton! must we
 then
 Risk new-found happiness again,
 Trust fate of arms once more?
 And is there not an humble glen,
 Where we, content and poor,
 Might build a cottage in the shade,
 A shepherd thou, and I to aid
 Thy task on dale and moor?—
 That reddening brow!—too well I
 know,
 Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
 While falsehood stains thy name;

* See the ballad of Otterbourne, in the
 “Border Minstrelsy,” vol. i. p. 345.

† Where James encamped before taking
 post on Flodden.

Go then to fight ! Clare bids thee go !
 Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
 And weep a warrior's shame;
 Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
 Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
 And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
 And send thee forth to fame !"

XI.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
 The midnight moon-beam slumber-
 ing lay,

And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
 Through loop-hole, and through em-
 brazure,

Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
 But chief where arched windows wide
 Illuminate the chapel's pride,

The sober glances fall.
 Much was their need; though seam'd
 with scars,

Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
 Though two grey priests were
 there,

And each a blazing torch held high,
 You could not by their blaze descrie
 The chapel's carving fair.

Amid that dim and smoky light,
 Chequering the silver moon-shine
 bright,

A bishop by the altar stood,*
 A noble lord of Douglas blood,
 With mitre seen, and roquet white.
 Yet show'd his meek and thoughtful
 eye

But little pride of prelacy;
 More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
 He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
 Than that beneath his rule he held
 The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.

Beside him ancient Angus stood,
 Doff'd his furr'd gown, and sable hood;
 O'er his huge form and visage pale,
 He wore a cap and shirt of mail;

And lean'd his large and wrinkled
 hand
 Upon the huge and sweeping brand

* The well-known Gawain Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, son of Archibald Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus. He was author of a Scottish metrical version of the Æneid, and of many other poetical pieces of great merit. He had not at this period attained the mitre.

Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
 His foeman's limbs to shred away,
 As wood-knife lops the sapling
 spray.

He seem'd as, from the tombs
 around

Rising at judgment-day,
 Some giant Douglas may be found
 In all his old array;

So pale his face, so huge his limb,
 So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
 And Clare the spurs bound on his
 heels;

And think what next he must have
 felt,

At buckling of the falchion belt!
 And judge how Clara changed her
 hue,

While fastening to her lover's side
 A friend, which, though in danger
 tried,

He once had found untrue!
 Then Douglas struck him with his
 blade:

"St. Michael and St. Andrew aid,
 I dub thee knight.

Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir!
 For, King, for Church, for Lady fair,
 See that thou fight."—

And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
 Said—"Wilton! grieve not for thy
 woes,

Disgrace, and trouble:
 For He, who honour best bestows,
 May give thee double."

De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must—
 "Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
 That Douglas is my brother!"

"Nay, nay," old Angus said, "not so;
 To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
 Thy wrongs no longer smother.

I have two sons in yonder field,
 And, if thou meet'st them under
 shield,

Upon them bravely—do thy worst;
 And foul fall him that blanches first!"

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,
 When Marmion did his troop array

To Surrey's camp to ride ;
 He had safe conduct for his band,
 Beneath the royal seal and hand,
 And Douglas gave a guide :
 The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
 Would Clara on her palfrey place,
 And whisper'd in an under tone,
 "Let the hawk stoop, his prey is
 flown."—

The train from out the castle drew,
 But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu :—

"Though something I might
 plain," he said,

"Of cold respect to stranger guest,
 Sent hither by your King's behest,

While in Tantallon's towers I staid ;
 Part we in friendship from your
 land,

And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
 But Douglas round him drew his
 cloak,

Folded his arms, and thus he spoke :—
 "My manors, halls, and bowers, shall
 still

Be open, at my Sovereign's will,
 To each one whom he lists, howe'er
 Unmeet to be the owner's peer.

My castles are my King's alone,
 From turret to foundation-stone—
 The hand of Douglas is his own ;
 And never shall in friendly grasp
 The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

XIV.

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek
 like fire,

And shook his very frame for ire,
 And—"This to me!" he said,—

"An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
 Such hand as Marmion's had not
 spared

To cleave the Douglas' head !
 And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
 He, who does England's message
 here,

Although the meanest in her state,
 May well, proud Angus, be thy mate :
 And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,

Even in thy pitch of pride,
 Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
 (Nay, never look upon your lord,
 And lay your hand upon your sword,)

I tell thee, thou'rt defied !
 And if thou said'st I am not peer
 To any lord in Scotland here,
 Lowland or Highland, far or near,
 Lord Angus, thou hast lied !"
 On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
 O'ercame the ashen hue of age :
 Fierce he broke forth,—“And darest
 thou, then,

To beard the lion in his den,
 The Douglas in his hall ?

And lopest thou hence unscathed to
 go?—

No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no.
 Up drawbridge, grooms—What, War-
 der, ho !

Let the portcullis fall.”

Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his
 need,

And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
 Like arrow through the archway
 sprung,

The ponderous grate behind him
 rung :

To pass there was such scanty room,
 The bars, descending, razed his
 plume.

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
 Just as it trembled on the rise ;

Nor lighter does the swallow skim
 Along the smooth lake's level brim :

And when Lord Marmion reach'd his
 band,

He halts, and turns with clenched
 hand,

And shout of loud defiance pours,
 And shook his gauntlet at the towers.

“Horse! horse!” the Douglas cried,
 “and chase!”

But soon he rein'd his fury's pace :
 “A royal messenger he came,

Though most unworthy of
 name.—

▲ letter forged ! Saint Jude to speed
 Did ever knight so foul a deed !

At first in heart it liked me ill,
 When the King praised his clerkly
 skill.

Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
 Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line.

So swore I, and I swear it still,
 Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
 Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
 Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
 I thought to slay him where he stood.
 'Tis pity of him too," he cried:
 "Bold can he speak, and fairly ride,
 I warrant him a warrior tried."
 With this his mandate he recalls,
 And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
 Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
 They cross'd the heights of Stanrig-
 moor.

Hist'roop more closely there he scann'd,
 And missed the Palmer from the
 band.—

"Palmer or not," young Blount did say,
 "He parted at the peep of day;
 Good sooth, it was in strange array."—
 "In what array?" said Marmion, quick.
 "My lord, I ill can spell the trick;
 But all night long, with clink and bang,
 Close to my couch did hammers clang;
 At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
 And from a loop-hole while I peep,
 Old Bell-the Cat came from the Keep,
 Wrapped in a gown of sables fair,
 As fearful of the morning air;
 Beneath, when that was blown aside,
 A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
 By Archibald won in bloody work,
 Against the Saracen and Turk:
 Last night it hung not in the hall;
 I thought some marvel would befall.
 And next I saw them saddled lead
 Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed;
 A matchless horse, though something
 old,

Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
 I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
 The Earl did much the Master* pray
 To use him on the battle-day;
 But he preferr'd—"Nay, Henry, cease!
 Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy
 peace.—

Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray
 What did Blount see at break of day?"—

* His eldest son, the Master of Angus.

XVII.

"In brief, my lord, we both descried
 (For then I stood by Henry's side)
 The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,

Upon the Earl's own favourite steed:
 All sheathed he was in armour bright,
 And much resembled that same knight,
 Subdued by you in Cotswold fight:

Lord Angus wished him speed."—
 The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
 A sudden light on Marmion broke;—
 "Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"

Hemutter'd; "Twas not fay nor ghost
 I met upon the moonlight wold,
 But living man of earthly mould.—

O dotage blind and gross!
 Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
 Had laid De Wilton in the dust,

My path no more to cross.—
 How stand we now?—he told his tale
 To Douglas; and with some avail;

'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged
 brow.—

Will Surrey dare to entertain
 'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved
 and vain?

Small risk of that, I trow.
 Yet Clare's sharp questions must I
 shun;

Must separate Constance from the
 Nun—

O, what a tangled web we weave,
 When first we practise to deceive!
 A Palmer too!—no wonder why
 I felt rebuked beneath his eye:
 I might have known there was but
 one

Whose look could quell Lord Marmi-
 on."

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged
 to speed

His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the
 Tweed,

Where Lennel's convent closed their
 march;

(There now is left but one frail arch;
 Yet mourn thou not its cells;

Our time a fair exchange has made;
 Hard by, in hospitable shade,

A reverend pilgrim dwells,

Well worth the whole Bernardine
brood,
That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.)
Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the Baron climb'd the
tower,

To view afar the Scottish power,
Encamp'd on Flodden edge:
The white pavilions made a show,
Like remnants of the winter snow,
Along the dusky ridge.
Long Marmion look'd:—at length his
eye

Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines:
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now ex-
tending;
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bend-
ing,
Now drawing back, and now de-
scending,
The skilful Marmion well could know,
They watch'd the motions of some
foe,
Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening
post,
And heedful watch'd them as they
cross'd

The Till by Twisel Bridge.
High sight it is, and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners
rearing,

Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men.

In slow succession still,
And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-time bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the
while,
And struggles through the deep de-
file?

What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern
strand,

His host Lord Surrey lead?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's
brand?

—O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skil'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry—"Saint Andrew and our
right!"

Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been
torn,

And Flodden had been Bannock-
bourne!—

The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host had gain'd the
plain;

Wheeling their march, and circling
still,

Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
"Hark! hark! my lord, an English
drum!

And see ascending squadrons come

Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what
hap,

My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the 'Till!

Yet more! yet more!—how far array'd
They file from out the hawthorn
shade,

And sweep so gallant by:
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
St. George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards
fly.”—

“Stint in thy prate,” quoth Blount,
“thou'dst best,

And listen to our lord's behest.”—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion
said,—

“This instant be our band array'd ;
The river must be quickly cross'd,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James,—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he
must,—

The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins.”

XXII.

Himself he swift on horse-back threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu ;
Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And mutter'd as the flood they view,
“The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw.
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,

So Clare shall bide with me.”
Then on that dangerous ford, and
deep,

Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies
creep,

He ventured desperately :
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom, before him ride ;
Headmost of all he stems the tide ;

And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's
course,

And, though far downward driven
per force,

The southern bank they gain ;
Behind them straggling, came to
shore,

As best they might, the train :
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain ;

Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharm'd, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men
array'd,

Then forward mov'd his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a Cross of Stone,
That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

XXIII.

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray ;
Their marshal'd lines stretch'd east
and west,

And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth ;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern
battle,

But slow and far between.—
The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion
staid :

“Here, by this Cross,” he gently
said,

“You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare :
O! think of Marmion in thy prayer!—
Thou wilt not?—well,—no less my
care

Shall, watchful, for thy weal pre-
pare.—

You, Blount and Eustace, are her
guard,

With ten pick'd archers of my
train ;

With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—

But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,

When here we meet again.”
He waited not for answer there,

And would not mark the maid's despair,
 Nor heed the discontented look
 From either squire; but spurr'd
 amain,
 And dashing through the battle plain,
 His way to Surrey took.

XXIV.

"—The good Lord Marmion, by
 my life!
 Welcome to danger's hour!—
 Short greeting serves in time of
 strife!

Thus have I ranged my power:—
 Myself will rule this central host,
 Stout Stanley fronts their right,
 My sons command the vaward post,
 With Brian Tunstall, stainless
 knight,

Lord Dacre, with his horsemen
 light,
 Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
 And succour those that need it most.

Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
 Would gladly to the vanguard go;
 Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
 With thee their charge will blithely
 share;

There fight thine own retainers too,
 Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."
 "Thanks, noble Surrey!" Marmion
 said,

Nor farther greeting there he paid,
 But, parting like a thunderbolt,
 First in the vanguard made a halt,

Where such a shout there rose
 Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the
 cry,

Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
 Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
 With Lady Clare upon the hill!
 On which (for far the day was spent)
 The western sunbeams now were
 bent.

The cry they heard, its meaning
 knew,
 Could plain their distant comrades
 view;

Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,

"Unworthy office here to stay!
 No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
 But see! look up—on Flodden bent
 The Scottish foe has fired his tent."

And sudden, as he spoke,
 From the sharp ridges of the hill,
 All downward to the banks of Till,
 Was wreathed in sable smoke.

Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
 The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
 As down the hill they broke;

Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
 Announced their march; their tread
 alone,

At times one warning trumpet blown,
 At times a stifled hum,
 Told England, from his mountain-
 throne

King James did rushing come.—
 Scarce could they hear, or see their
 foes,

Until at weapon-point they close.—
 They close, in clouds of smoke and
 dust,

With sword-sway, and with lance's
 thrust;

And such a yell was there,
 Of sudden and portentous birth,
 As if men fought upon the earth,
 And fiends in upper air;
 O life and death were in the shout,
 Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
 And triumph and despair.

Long look'd the anxious squires;
 their eye

Could in the darkness nought descry.

XXVI.

At length the freshening western
 blast

Aside the shroud of battle cast;
 And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
 Above the brightening cloud appears;
 And in the smoke the pennons flew,
 As in the storm the white sea-mew.

Then mark'd they, dashing broad
 and far,

The broken billows of the war,
 And plumed crests of chieftains
 brave,

Floating like foam upon the wave;
 But nought distinct they see;

Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flash'd
amain;

Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose
again,

Wild and disorderly.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
And stainless Tunstall's banner
white,

And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight:

Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Highlandman,
And many a rugged Border clan,

With Huntly, and with Home.

XXVII.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;
Though there the western mountain-
eer

Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword
plied.

'Twas vain:—But Fortune, on the
right,
With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's
fight.

Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;

Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer
grew

Around the battle-yell.

The Border slogan rent the sky!

A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:

Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low,
now high,

The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and
sail,

It waver'd 'mid the foes.

No longer Blount the view could
bear:

“By Heaven, and all its saints! I
swear

I will not see it lost!

Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter
prayer,—

I gallop to the host.”

And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.

The fiery youth, with desperate
charge,

Made, for a space, an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—

But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the
ground,

It sunk among the foes.

Then Eustace mounted too:—yet
staid

As loth to leave the helpless maid,

When, fast as shaft can fly,

Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils
spread,

The loose rein dangling from his
head,

Housing and saddle bloody red,

Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,

A look and sign to Clara cast

To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,

Left in that dreadful hour alone:

Perchance her reason stoops, or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,

Braces her mind to desperate
tone.—

The scatter'd van of England
wheels:—

She only said, as loud in air

The tumult roar'd, “Is Wilton
there?”—

They fly, or, madden'd by despair,
Fight but to die,—“Is Wilton
there?”

With that, straight up the hill there
rode

Two horsemen drench'd with gore,

And in their arms, a helpless load,

A wounded knight they bore.

His hand still strain'd the broken
brand;

His arms were smear'd with blood
and sand.

Dra-g'd from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,

Said—"By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master
sped,

And see the deep cut on his head!

Good-night to Marmion."—

"Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling
cease,

He opens his eyes," said Eustace;
"peace!"

XXIX.

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free
air,

Around 'gan Marmion wildly
stare:—

"Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace
where?

Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
Redeem my pennon,—charge again!
Cry—"Marmion to the rescue!"—
Vain!

Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall no'er be heard
again!—

Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring:
Tell him his squadrons up to
bring.—

Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless
shield:

Edmund is down:—my life is left;
The Admiral alone is left.

Let Stanley charge with spur of
fire,—

With Chester charge, and Lanca-
shire,

Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or Victory and England's lost.—

Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets!
fly!

Leave Marmion here alone—to die."
They parted, and alone he lay;

Clare drew her from the sight
away,

Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmur'd.—"Is there
none,

Of all my halls have nursed,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to
bring

Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst!"

XXX.

O, Woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade

By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the
brow,

A ministering angel thou!—

Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When, with the Baron's casque, the
maid

To the nigh streamlet ran:

Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.

She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain's side,

Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.

Where shall she turn?—behold her
mark

A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.

Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink. wear. pilgrim. drink. and.

pray.

For. the. kind. soul. of. Sybil.

Grey.

Who. built. this. cross. and.

cell.

She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied

A monk supporting Marmion's
head:
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrieve the dying, bless the
dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the
wave,

And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
“Is it the hand of Clare,” he said,
“Or injured Constance, bathes my
head?”

Then, as remembrance rose,—
“Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.

Short space, few words, are mine to
spare;

Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!”—
“Alas!” she said, “the while,—

O, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She—died at Holy Isle.”—

Lord Marmion started from the
ground,

As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.

“Then it was truth,”—he said—“I
knew

That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,

Would spare me but a day!

For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar-stone,
Might bribe him for delay.

It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand.”

Then, fainting, down on earth he
sunk,

Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to staunch the gushing
wound:

The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.

Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,

And that the priest he could not hear,
For that she ever sung,

“In the lost battle, borne down by the
flying,

Where mingles war's rattle with groans
of the dying!”

So the notes rung;—
“Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel
hand,

Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—

O, look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;

O, think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,

And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this.”—

The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the
gale,

And—STANLEY! was the cry;
A light on Marmion's visage spread,

And fired his glazing eye;
With dying hand, above his head,

He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted “Victory!—

Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stan-
ley, on!”

Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening
fell,

Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,

Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward

wing,

Where Huntly, and where Home?—
O, for a blast of that dread horn,

On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,

When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,

On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in
vain,

To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,

While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And roundit toils, and bleeds, and dies.

Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,

While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers

stray.—

"O, Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
 And placed her on her steed,
 And led her to the chapel fair,
 Of Tillmouth upon Tweed.
 There all the night they spent in pray-
 er,
 And at the dawn of morning, there
 She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
 More desperate grew the strife of
 death.
 The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
 In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
 Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons
 sweep
 To break the Scottish circle deep,
 That fought around their King.
 But yet, though thick the shafts as
 snow,
 Though charging knights like whirl-
 winds go,
 Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
 Unbroken was the ring;
 The stubborn spear-men still made
 good
 Their dark impenetrable wood,
 Each stepping where his comrade
 stood,
 The instant that he fell.
 No thought was there of dastard flight,
 Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
 Groom fought like noble, squire like
 knight,
 As fearlessly and well;
 Till utter darkness closed her wing
 O'er their thin host and wounded King.
 Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
 Led back from strife his shatter'd
 bands;
 And from the charge they drew,
 As mountain-waves, from wasted
 lands,
 Sweep back to ocean blue.
 Then did their loss his foemen know;
 Their King, their Lords, their might-
 iest low,
 They melted from the field as snow,
 When streams are swoln and south
 winds blow,
 Dissolves in silent dew.

Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless
 plash,
 While many a broken band,
 Disorder'd, through her currents
 dash,
 To gain the Scottish land;
 To town and tower, to down and dale,
 To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
 And raise the universal wail.
 Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
 Shall many an age that wail prolong:
 Still from the sire the son shall hear
 Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
 Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's
 spear,
 And broken was her shield!

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side:—
 There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
 Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one:
 The sad survivors all are gone.—
 View not that corpse mistrustfully—
 Defaced an l mangle l though it be;
 Nor to yon Border Castle high,
 Look northward with upbraiding eye;
 Nor cherish hope in vain,
 That, journeying far on foreign strand
 The Royal Pilgrim to his land
 May yet return again.
 He saw the wreck his rashness
 wrought;
 Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
 And fell on Flodden plain;
 And well in death his trusty brand,
 Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
 Beseem'd the monarch slain.
 But, O! how changed since yon blithe
 night!—
 Gladly I turn me from the sight,
 Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale:—Fitz-Eustace' care
 A pierced and mangled body bare
 'To moated Lichfield's lofty pile;
 And there, beneath the southern
 aisle,
 A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
 Did long Lord Marmion's image bear,
 (Now vainly for its sight you look;

"Twas levell'd when fanatic Brook
 The fair cathedral storm'd and
 took;
 But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint
 Chad,
 A guerdon meet the spoiler had !)
 There erst was martial Marmion
 found,
 His feet upon a couchant hound,
 His hands to heaven upraised;
 And all around, on scutcheon rich,
 And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
 His arms and feats were blazed.
 And yet, though all was carved so
 fair,
 And priest for Marmion breathed the
 prayer,
 The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
 From Ettrick woods a peasant swain
 Follow'd his lord to Flodden plain,—
 One of those flowers, whom plaintive
 lay
 In Scotland mourns as "wede away:"
 Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
 And dragg'd him to its foot, and
 died,
 Close by the noble Marmion's side.
 The spoilers stripp'd and gash'd the
 slain,
 And thus their corpses were mis-
 ta'en;
 And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
 The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were, to show
 Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and
 low.
 They dug his grave e'en where he
 lay,
 But every mark is gone;
 Time's wasting hand has done away
 The simple Cross of Sybil Grey,
 And broke her font of stone.
 But yet from out the little hill
 Oozes the slender springlet still.
 Oft halts the stranger there,
 For thence may best his curious eye
 The memorable field descry;
 And shepherd boys repair
 To seek the water-flag and rush,
 And rest them by the hazel bush,

And plait their garlands fair;
 Nor dream they sit upon the grave,
 That holds the bones of Marmion
 brave.—
 When thou shalt find the little hill,
 With thy heart commune, and be
 still.
 If ever, in temptation strong,
 Thou left'st the right path for the
 wrong;
 If every devious step, thus trod,
 Still led thee farther from the road;
 Dread thou to speak presumptuous
 doom
 On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
 But say, "He died a gallant knight,
 With sword in hand, for England's
 right."

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
 Who cannot image to himself,
 That all through Flodden's dismal
 night,
 Wilton was foremost in the fight;
 That, when brave Surrey's steed was
 slain,
 'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
 'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest
 hew'd.
 Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood;
 Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
 He was the living soul of all:
 That, after fight, his faith made plain,
 He won his rank and lands again;
 And charged his old paternal shield
 With bearings won on Flodden field.
 Nor sing I to that simple maid,
 To whom it must in terms be said,
 That King and kinsman did agree,
 To bless fair Clara's constancy;
 Who cannot, unless I relate,
 Paint to her mind the bridal state;
 That Wolsey's voice the blessing
 spoke,
 More, Sands, and Denny, pass'd the
 joke;
 That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
 And Catherine's hand the stocking
 threw;
 And afterwards, for many a day,
 That it was held enough to say,

In blessing to a wedded pair,
 "Love they like Wilton and like
 Clare!"

L'Envoy.

TO THE READER.

WHY then a final note prolong,
 Or lengthen out a closing song,
 Unless to bid the gentles speed,
 Who long have listed to my rede?*

To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
 To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
 Sound head, clean hand, and piercing
 wit,
 And patriotic heart—as Pitt!

A garland for the hero's crest,
 And twined by her he loves the best;
 To every lovely lady bright,
 What can I wish but faithful knight?
 To every faithful lover too,
 What can I wish but lady true?
 And knowledge to the studious sage;
 And pillow to the head of age.
 To thee, dear school-boy, whom my
 lay
 Has cheated of thy hour of play,
 Light task, and merry holiday!
 To all, to each, a fair good night,
 And pleasing dreams, and slumbers
 light!

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

To the Right Honourable CHARLES EARL OF DALKEITH, this Poem is inscribed by the author.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Poem, now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorizes the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is Three Nights and Three Days.

INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,

The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners
gone;
A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and
poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to
door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's* stately
tower

* *Newark's stately tower.* A ruined tower now; situated three miles from Selkirk, on the banks of the Yarrow.

Looks out from Yarrow's birchen
bower:

The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh,
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy
bar

Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess* marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man
well:

For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody
tomb!

When kindness had his wants sup-
plied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride:
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, † dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter. ‡ rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice
though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to
speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon ob-
tain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of
state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,

Perchance he wished his boon de-
nied:

For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the
ease

Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and
pain,

Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!

The pitying Duchess praised its
chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him
time,

Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the
Good,

When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure
wild,

The old man raised his face and
smiled;

And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought sup-
plied;
And while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL
sung.

* *The Duchess.* Anne, the heiress of Buccleuch, who had been married to the unhappy Duke of Monmouth, son of Charles II. He was beheaded for rebellion against James II., 1685.

† *Earl Francis.* The Duchess's late father.

‡ *Walter, Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather of the Duchess, and a celebrated warrior.*

CANTO FIRST.

I.

The feast was over in Branksome tower,
 And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
 Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
 Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
 Jesu Maria, shield us well!
 No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
 Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
 Knight, and page, and household squire,
 Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
 Or crowded round the ample fire:
 The staghounds, weary with the chase,
 Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
 And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
 From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
 Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall;
 Nine-and-twenty squires of name
 Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
 Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
 Waited, duteous, on them all;
 They were all knights of mettle true,
 Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
 With belted sword, and spur on heel:
 They quitted not their harness bright,
 Neither by day, nor yet by night;
 They lay down to rest,
 With corslet laced,
 Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;

They carved at the meal
 With gloves of steel,
 And they drank the red wine
 through the helmet barr'd.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
 Waited the beck of the warders ten;
 Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
 Stood saddled in stable day and night,
 Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
 And with Jedwood-axe at saddlebow;
 A hundred more fed free in stall:—
 Such was the custom of Branksome-Hall.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
 Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?—
 They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying;
 They watch to hear the war-horn braying;
 To see St. George's red cross streaming,
 To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
 They watch, against Southern force and guile,
 Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
 Threaten Branksome's lordly towers
 From Warkwork, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall—
 Many a valiant knight is here;
 But he, the chieftain of them all,
 His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
 Beside his broken spear.
 Bards long shall tell
 How Lord Walter fell!
 When startled burghers fled, afar,
 The furies of the Border war;
 When the streets of high Dunedin*
 Saw lances gleam and falchions redden,

* Edinburgh.

And heard the slogan's* deadly
yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage they drew;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions
slew;
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of
Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons
lent:
Put o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor slower nor
tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the
slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow.
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's
knee—
“And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall
be!”
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd
sire,
And wept in wild despair,

* The war-cry, or gathering word, of a
border clan.

But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she would
wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,
Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learn'd the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said, he changed his mortal frame,
By feat of magic mystery;
For when, in studious mode, he paced
St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's† red
side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets
round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.

† A steep embankment.

In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night?
But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung
oak,

From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!

It was the Spirit of the Flood that
spoke,
And he called on the Spirit of the
Fell.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

—"Brother, nay—

On my hills the moon-beams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,

Merry elves their morris pacing,

To aerial minstrelsy,

Emerald rings on brown heath trac-
ing,

Trip it deft and merrily.

Up, and mark their nimble feet!

Up, and list their music sweet!"—

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Tears of an imprisoned maiden

Mix with my polluted stream;

Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale
beam.

Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,

When shall cease these federal jars?

What shall be the maiden's fate?

Who shall be the maiden's mate?"

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth
roll,

In utter darkness round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and
grim:

Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet
star;

Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they
shower,

On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's
tower,

Till pride be quell'd, and love be
free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
And the heavy sound was still;

It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.

But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;

For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.

She raised her stately head,
And her heart throbb'd high with
pride:—

"Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The lady sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them
all,

Her son pursued his infant play.

A fancied moss-trooper,* the boy

The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall right merrily,

In mimic foray rode,
Even bearded knights, in arms grown
old,

Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts of rugged mould
Were stubborn as the steel they
wore.

For the grey warriors prophesied,
How the brave boy, in future war,

* Moss-trooper, a borderer, whose profes-
sion was pillage of the English. These ma-
rauders were called *moss-troopers* because

they dwelt in the mosses, and rode, on their
incursions, in troops.

Should tame the Unicorn's pride,*
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.†

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
One moment, and no more ;
One moment gazed with a mother's
eye,

As she paused at the arched door :
Then from amid the armed train,
She called to her William of Delo-
raine.

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee ;
Through Solway sands, through Tar-
ras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to
cross ;

By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-
hounds ;

In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them one by one ;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow or July's pride ;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight or matin prime.
Steady of heart and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland.
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's King and Scotland's
Queen.

XXII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at
need,

Mount thee on the wightest steed ;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside ;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's
aisle.

Greet the father well from me ;

* The Unicorn Head was the crest of the Carrs, or Kerrs, of Cessford, the enemies of the child's late father.

† The Crescent and the Star were armorial bearings of the Scotts of Buccleuch.

‡ *Hairibee*, the place on Carlisle wall where the moss-troopers, if caught, were hung. The neck-verse was the first verse of Psalm 51. If a criminal claimed on the scaffold "benefit

Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with
thee

To win the treasure of the tomb.
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon
is bright ;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty
dead.

XXIII.

"What he gives thee. see thou
keep ;

Stay not thou for food or sleep ;
Be it scroll or be it book.
Into it, Knight, thou must not look ;
If thou readest thou art lorn !
Better hadst thou ne'er been
born."—

XXIV.

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey
steed,

Which drinks of the Teviot clear ;
Ere break of day," the warrior 'gan
say,

"Again will I be here :
And safer by none may thy errand
be done,

Than, noble dame, by me ;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."‡

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,§
And soon the Teviot side he won.

Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod ;
He passed the Peel of Goldiland,||
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring
strand ;

Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's
mound,

of his clergy," a priest instantly presented him with a Psalter, and he read his neck-verse. The power of reading it entitled him to his life, which was spared ; but he was banished the kingdom. See Palgrave's "Merchant and Priest."

§ *Barbican*, the defence of the outer gate of a feudal castle.

|| *Peel*, a border tower.

Where Druid shades still fitted
 round ;
 In Hawick twinkled many a light ;
 Behind him soon they set in night ;
 And soon he spurred his courser
 keen
 Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen
 mark ;—
 "Stand, ho ! thou courier of the
 dark."—
 "For Branksome, ho !" the knight
 rejoin'd,
 And left the friendly tower behind.
 He turn'd him now from Teviot-
 side,
 And, guided by the tinkling rill,
 Northward the dark ascent did
 ride,
 And gained the moor at Horslie-
 hill ;
 Broad on the left before him lay,
 For many a mile, the Roman way,*

XXVII.

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
 A moment breathed his panting
 steed ;
 Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
 And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.
 On Minto-crag the moonbeams glint,
 Where Barnhill hewed his bed of
 flint ;
 Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest
 Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
 Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
 For many a league his prey could
 spy ;
 Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes
 borne,
 The terrors of the robber's horn ?
 Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
 The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
 When some sad swain shall teach the
 grove,
 Ambition is no cure for love !

* An ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire.

† *Barded*, or *barbed*, applied to a horse accoutred with defensive armour.

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Delo-
 raine,
 To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
 Where Aill, from mountains freed,
 Down from the lakes did raving
 come ;
 Each wave was crested with tawny
 foam,
 Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
 In vain ! no torrent, deep or broad,
 Might bar the bold moss-trooper's
 road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
 And the water broke o'er the saddle
 bow ;
 Above the foaming tide, I ween
 Scarce half the charger's neck was
 seen ;
 For he was barded† from counter to
 tail,
 And the rider was armed complete in
 mail ;
 Never heavier man and horse
 Stem'd a midnight torrent's force.
 The warrior's very plume, I say,
 Was daggl'd by the dashing spray ;
 Yet, through good heart and Our
 Ladye's grace,
 At length he gain'd the landing place.

XXX.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man
 won,
 And sternly shook his plumed
 head,
 As glanced his eye o'er Halidon ;‡
 For on his soul the slaughter red
 Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
 When first the Scott and Carr were
 foes ;
 When royal James beheld the fray,
 Prize to the victor of the day ;
 When Home and Douglas, in the van,
 Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
 Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood
 dear
 Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

‡ Halidon was an ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford, now demolished.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
 And soon the hated heath was past ;
 And far beneath, in lustre wan,
 Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran :
 Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
 Seem'd dimly huge the dark Abbaye.
 When Hawick he pass'd had curfew
 rung,
 Now midnight lauds* were in Mel-
 rose sung.
 The sound, upon the fitful gale,
 In solemn wise did rise and fall,
 Like that wild harp, whose magic
 tone
 Is waken'd by the winds alone.
 But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas
 silence all ;
 He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
 And sought the convent's lonely
 wall.

HERE paused the harp; and with its
 swell

The Master's fire and courage fell ;
 Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
 And, gazing timid on the crowd,
 He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
 If they approved his minstrelsy ;
 And, diffident of present praise,
 Somewhat he spoke of former days,
 And how old age, and wand'ring long,
 Had done his hand and harp some
 wrong.

The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
 And every gentle lady there,
 Each after each, in due degree,
 Gave praises to his melody ;
 His hand was true, his voice was
 clear,
 And much they long'd the rest to
 hear.

Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
 After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose
 aright,

* *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Cath-
 olic Church.

Go visit it by the pale moonlight ;
 For the gay beams of lightsome day
 Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
 When the broken arches are black in
 night,
 And each shafted oriel glimmers
 white ;
 When the cold light's uncertain
 shower
 Streams on the ruin'd central tower ;
 When buttress and buttress alter-
 nately,
 Seem framed of ebon and ivory ;
 When silver edges the imagery,
 And the scrolls that teach thee to live
 and die ;
 When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
 And the owl to hoot o'er the dead
 man's grave,
 Then go—but go alone the while—
 Then view St. David's ruin'd pile ;
 And, home returning, soothly swear,
 Was never scene so sad and fair !

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there ;
 Little reck'd he of the scene so fair ;
 With dagger's hilt, on the wicket
 strong,
 He struck full loud, and struck full
 long.

The porter hurried to the gate—
 "Who knocks so loud, and knocks so
 late?"

"From Branksome I," the warrior
 cried ;
 And straight the wicket open'd wide :
 For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle
 stood,

To fence the rights of fair Melrose ;
 And lands and livings, many a rood,
 Had gifted the shrine for their
 souls' repose.

III.

Bold Deloraine his errand said ;
 The porter bent his humble head ;
 With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
 And noiseless step, the path he trod,
 The arched cloister, far and wide,
 Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
 Till, stooping low his lofty crest,

He enter'd the cell of the ancient
priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,*
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets
thee by me,
Says, that the fated hour has come,
And that to-night I shall watch with
thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the Monk
arose,
With toil his stiffen'd limbs he
rear'd;
A hundred years had flung their
snows
On his thin locks and floating
beard.

V.

And strangely on the knight look'd
he,
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild
and wide;
"And, darest thou, Warrior! seek to
see
What heaven and hell alike would
hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of
thorn;
For threescore years, in penance
spent,
My knees those flinty stones have
worn:
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be
known.
Would'st thou thy every future
year
In ceaseless prayer and penance
drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with
fear—
Then, daring Warrior, follow
me!

VI.

"Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;

For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me
be gone."—

VII.

Again on the Knight look'd the
Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior
bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that
were long since by,
When his limbs were strong and his
courage was high:—
Now, slow and faint, he led the
way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden
lay;
The pillar'd arches were over their
head,
And beneath their feet were the
bones of the dead.

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets
bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd
there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches
as fair.
The monk gazed long on the lovely
moon,
Then into the night he looked
forth;
And red and bright the streamers
light
Were dancing in the glowing
north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squad-
rons start;
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot
so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern
light.

*Aventayle, visor of the helmet.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
 They enter'd now the chancel tall ;
 The darken'd roof rose high aloof
 On pillars lofty and light and
 small ;
 The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbed
 aisle,
 Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille,
 The corbells were carved grotesque
 and grim ;
 And the pillars, with clustered shafts
 so trim,
 With base and with capital flourished
 around,
 Seemed bundles of lances which gar-
 lands had bound.

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner
 riven,
 Shook to the cold night-wind of
 heaven,
 Around the screen'd altar's pale ;
 And there the dying lamps did burn,
 Before thy low and lonely urn,
 O gallant chief of Otterburne !
 And thine, dark Knight of Liddes-
 dale !
 O fading honours of the dead !
 O high ambition, lowly laid !

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone
 Through slender shafts of shapely
 stone,
 By foliaged tracery combined ;
 Thou wouldst have thought some
 fairy's hand
 'Twixt poplars straight the ozier
 wand,
 In many a freakish knot, had
 twined ;
 Then framed a spell, when the work
 was done,
 And changed the willow wreaths to
 stone.
 The silver light, so pale and faint,
 Shew'd many a prophet, and many
 a saint,
 Whose image on the glass was
 dyed ;

Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
 Triumphant Michael brandished,
 And trampled the Apostate's pride.
 The moonbeam kiss'd the holy pane,
 And threw on the pavement a bloody
 stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble
 stone,
 (A Scottish monarch slept below ;)*
 Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn
 tone :—
 "I was not always a man of woe ;
 For Paynim countries I have trod,
 And fought beneath the Cross of God :
 Now, strange to my eyes thine arms
 appear,
 And their iron clang sounds strange
 to my ear.

XIII.

"In these far climes it was my lot
 To meet the wond'rous Michael
 Scott,
 A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
 That when, in Salamanca's cave,
 Him listed his magic wand to wave,
 The bells would ring in Notre
 Dame !
 Some of his skill he taught to me ;
 And, Warrior, I could say to thee
 The words that cleft Eildon hills in
 three,
 And bridled the Tweed with a curb
 of stone :
 But to speak them were a deadly sin ;
 And for having but thought them my
 heart within,
 A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

"When Michael lay on his dying
 bed,
 His conscience was awakened :
 He bethought him of his sinful deed,
 And he gave me a sign to come with
 speed ;
 I was in Spain when the morning
 rose,
 But I stood by his bed ere evening
 close.

* Alexander II.

The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed
laid ;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy
nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein
look ;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's
need :

And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the
moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the
dead,
When the floor of the chancel was
stained red,
That his patron's cross might over
him wave,
And scare the fiends from the
Wizard's grave.

XVI.

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid !
Strange sounds along the chancel
pass'd,
The banners waved without a
blast ;"—
—Still spoke the Monk, when the
bell toll'd one !—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at
need,

Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed ;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with
dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his
head.

XVII.

"Lo, Warrior ! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty
dead ;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the
night :

That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the monk to the broad
flagstone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced
upon :
He pointed to a secret nook ;
An iron bar the Warrior took ;
And the Monk made a sign with his
withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he
went ;
His sinewy frame o'er the gravestone
bent ;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows,
like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at
length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so glori-
ously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof !
No earthly flame blazed e'er so
bright :
It shone like heaven's own blessed
light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage
pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's
mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX.

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old ;
A palmer's amice wrapped him
round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric
bound,

* It was a belief of the Middle Ages that eternal lamps were to be found burning in ancient sepulchres.

Like a pilgrim from beyond the
sca;
His left hand held his Book of
Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his
knee;
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten
grace.

XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody
plain,
And trampled down the warriors
slain,
And neither known remorse nor
awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he owned;
His breath came thick, his head
swam round,
When this strange scene of death
he saw,
Bewilder'd and unnerved he stood,
And the priest prayed fervently and
loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.

And when the priest his death-prayer
had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:—
“Now, speed thee what thou hast to
do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning
stone!”—
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty
Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron
bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead
man frowned;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the Warrior's
sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o'er the
tomb,
The night returned in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and
the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest with-
drew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they
pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the
blast,
And through the cloister-galleries
small,
Which at mid-height thread the chan-
cel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to
day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII.

“Now, hie thee hence,” the Father
said,
“And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St.
John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have
done!”
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance
sped;
When the convent met at the noon-
tide bell—
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was
dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he
pray'd.

XXIV.

The Knight breathed free in the
morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he pass'd the
tombstones grey,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;

For the mystic Book, to his bosom
 prest,
 Felt like a load upon his breast;
 And his joints, with nerves of iron
 twined,
 Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
 Full fain was he when the dawn of
 day
 Began to brighten Cheviot grey;
 He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
 And he said Ave Mary, as well as he
 might.

XXV.

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
 The sun had brighten'd the Cart-
 er's* side.
 And soon beneath the rising day
 Smiled Franksome Towers and Te-
 viot's tide.
 The wild birds told their warbling
 tale,
 And waken'd every flower that
 blows;
 And peeped forth the violet pale,
 And spread her breast the mountain
 rose.
 And lovelier than the rose so red,
 Yet paler than the violet pale,
 She early left her sleepless bed,
 The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

Why does fair Margaret so early
 awake?
 And don her kirtle so hastilie;
 And the silken knots, which in hurry
 she would make,
 Why tremble her slender fingers to
 tie;
 Why does she stop, and look often
 around,
 As she glides down the secret stair;
 And why does she pat the shaggy
 blood-hound,
 As he rouses him up from his lair;
 And, though she passes the postern
 alone,
 Why is not the watchman's bugle
 blown?

* A mountain on the Border of England,
 above Jedburgh.

XXVII.

The ladye steps in doubt and dread,
 Lest her watchful mother hear her
 tread;
 The ladye caresses the rough blood-
 hound,
 Lest his voice should waken the castle
 round,
 The watchman's bugle is not blown,
 For he was her foster-father's son;
 And she glides through the greenwood
 at dawn of light,
 To meet Baron Henry, her own true
 knight.

XXVIII.

The Knight and ladye fair are met,
 And under the hawthorn's boughs are
 set.
 A fairer pair were never seen
 To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
 He was stately, and young, and tall;
 Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
 And she, when love, scarce told, scarce
 hid,
 Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
 When the half sigh her swelling
 breast
 Against the silken ribbon prest;
 When her blue eyes their secret told,
 Though shaded by her locks of gold—
 Where would you find the peerless
 fair,
 With Margaret of Branksome might
 compar!

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
 You listen to my minstrelsy;
 Your waving locks ye backward throw,
 And sidelong bend your necks of
 snow;
 Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
 Of two true lovers in a dale;
 And how the Knight, with tender
 fire,
 To paint his faithful passion
 strove;
 Swore he might at her feet expire,
 But never, never, cease to love;
 And how she blush'd, and how she
 sigh'd,
 And, half consenting, half denied,

And said that she would die a maid:—
 Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
 Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
 Margaret of Branksome's choice
 should be.

XXX.

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
 My harp has lost the enchanting
 strain;

Its lightness would my age reprove:
 My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,
 My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
 I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
 The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
 And held his crested helm and
 spear:

That Dwarf was scarce an earthly
 man,

If the tales were true that of him ran
 Through all the Border far and
 near.

'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting
 rode,

Through Reedsdale's glens, but rare-
 ly trod,

He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost!
 lost!"

And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
 A leap, of thirty feet and three,

Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
 Distorted like some dwarfish ape,

And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's
 knee.

Lord Cranstoun was some whit dis-
 may'd;

'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
 To rid him of his company;

But where he rode one mile, the
 Dwarf ran four,

And the Dwarf was first at the castle
 door.

XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
 This elvish Dwarf with the Baron
 staid;

Little he ate, and less he spoke,
 Nor mingled with the menial flock;
 And oft apart his arms he toss'd,

And often mutter'd "Lost! lost!
 lost!"

He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,*
 But well Lord Cranstoun served he:

And he of his service was full fain;
 For once he had been ta'en or slain,

An it had not been for his ministry.
 All between Home and Hermitage,

Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-
 Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on Pilgrimage,
 And took with him this elvish Page,

To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes.
 For there beside our Lady's lake,

An offering he had sworn to make,
 And he would pay his vows.

But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd
 a band

Of the best that would ride at her
 command:

The trysting place was Newark Lee.
 Wat of Harden came thither amain,

And thither came John of Thirlestane,
 And thither came William of Delor-
 aine;

They were three hundred spears
 and three.

Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow
 stream,

Their horses prance, their lances
 gleam.

They came to St. Mary's lake ere day;
 But the chapel was void, and the

Baron away.

They burn'd the chapel for very rage,
 And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Gob-
 lin-Page.

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good green
 wood,

As under the aged oak he stood,
 The Baron's courser pricks his ears,

As if a distant noise he hears.
 The Dwarf waves his long lean arm

on high,
 And signs to the lovers to part and fly:

No time was then to vow or sigh.
 Fair Margaret through the hazel grove,

* Idle.

Flew like the startled cushat-dove;
 The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
 Vaulted the Knight on his steel
 amain,
 And, pondering deep that morning's
 scene,
 Rode eastward through the haw-
 thorns green.

WHILE thus he poured the lengthen'd
 tale

The Minstrel's voice began to fail:
 Full slyly smiled the observant page,
 And gave the wither'd hand of age
 A goblet crown'd with mighty wine,
 The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
 He raised the silver cup on high,
 And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
 Pray'd God to bless the Duchess
 long,

And all who cheer'd a son of song.
 The attending maidens smiled to see
 How long, how deep, how zealously,
 The precious juice the Minstrel
 quaff'd;

And he, embolden'd by the draught,
 Look'd gaily back to them, and
 laugh'd.

The cordial nectar of the bowl
 Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his
 soul;

A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
 Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

AND said I that my limbs were old,
 And said I that my blood was cold,
 And that my kindly fire was fled,
 And my poor wither'd heart was
 dead,

And that I might not sing of love?—
 How could I to the dearest theme,
 That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,

So foul, so false a recreant prove!
 How could I name love's very name,
 Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

* The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name is a crane, dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's
 reed;

In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
 In halls, in gay attire is seen,
 In hamlets, dances on the green.

Love rules the court, the camp, the
 grove,

And men below, and saints above;
 For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I
 ween,

While, pondering deep the tender
 scene,

He rode through Branksome's haw-
 thorn green.

But the Page shouted wild and
 shrill,

And scarce his helmet could he
 don,

When downward from the shady
 hill

A stately knight came pricking on.
 That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,

Was dark with sweat, and splashed
 with clay;

His armor red with many a stain;
 He seem'd in such a weary plight,

As if he had ridden the live-long
 night;

For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
 When, dancing in the sunny beam,
 He mark'd the crane on the baron's
 crest;*

For his ready spear was in his rest.

Few were the words, and stern and
 high,

That mark'd the foemen's feudal
 hate;

For question fierce, and proud re-
 ply,

Gave signal soon of dire debate.
 Their very coursers seemed to know
 That each was other's mortal foe,

motto. *Thou shalt want ere I want.* Arms thus punning on the name, are said heraldically to be "canting."

And snorted fire, when wheel'd
around,
To give each knight his vantage-
ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a
prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine norsigh'd nor pray'd,
Nor saint, nor ladye, call'd to aid;
But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd
his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions
proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-
cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
The stately Baron backwards bent;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on
the gale.
The tough ash spear, so stout and
true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Bor-
derer's mail;
Through shield, and jack, and acton,
past,
Deep in his bosom, broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
Till, tumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing
broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course;
Nor knew—so giddyroll'd his brain—
His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

VII.

But when he reign'd his courser
round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,

And lead him to Branksome castle-
gate:

His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
"This shalt thou do without delay:
No longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift will be at my dying
day."

VIII.

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
The Goblin Page behind abode;
His lord's command he ne'er with-
stood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride
Like a book-bosomed priest should
ride; *
He thought not to search or stanch
the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX.

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp:
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd
hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read,
It had much of glamour † might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling ‡ seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem
youth—
All was delusion, nought was
truth.

* Priests were wont to carry their mass-
book, for burying and marrying, &c., in their
bosoms.

† Magical delusion.

‡ A shepherd's hut.

X.

He had not read another spell,
 When on his cheek a buffet fell,
 So fierce, it stretch'd him on the
 plain,
 Beside the wounded Deloraine.
 From the ground he rode dismay'd,
 And shook his huge and matted
 head;
 One word he mutter'd, and no more,
 "Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—
 No more the Elfin Page durst try
 Into the wondrous Book to pry;
 The clasps, though smear'd with
 Christian gore,
 Shut faster than they were before.
 He hid it underneath his cloak.—
 Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
 I cannot tell, so not I thrive;
 It was not given by man alive.

XI.

Unwillingly himself he address'd,
 To do his master's high behest:
 He lifted up the living corse,
 And laid it on the weary horse;
 He lod him into Branksome Hall,
 Before the beards of the warders all;
 And each did after swear and say,
 There only pass'd a wain of hay.
 He took him to Lord David's tower,
 Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
 And, but that stronger spells were
 spread,
 And the door might not be opened,
 He laid him on her very bed.
 Whate'er he did of gramarye,*
 Was always done maliciously;
 He flung the warrior on the ground,
 And the blood well'd freshly from
 the wound.

XII.

As he repass'd the outer court,
 He spied the fair young child at
 sport;
 He thought to train him to the wood;
 For, at a word, be it understood,
 He was always for ill, and never for
 good.

* Magic.

Seem'd to the boy, some comrade
 gay
 Led him forth to the woods to play;
 On the drawbridge the warders stout
 Saw a terrier and lurcher passing
 out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
 Until they came to a woodland
 brook;
 The running stream dissolved the
 spell,
 And his own elvish shape he took.
 Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
 He had crippled the joints of the no-
 ble child;
 Or, with his fingers long and lean,
 Had strangled him in fiendish
 spleen;
 But his awful mother he had in
 dread,
 And also his power was limited;
 So he but scowl'd on the startled
 child,
 And darted through the forest wild;
 The woodland brook he bounding
 cross'd,
 And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost!
 lost! lost!"—

XIV.

Full sore amazed at the wondrous
 change,
 And frighten'd as a child might be,
 At the wild yell and visage strange,
 And the dark words of gramarye,
 The child, amidst the forest bower,
 Stood rooted like a lily flower;
 And when, at length, with trembling
 pace,
 He sought to find where Brank-
 some lay,
 He fear'd to see that grisly face
 Glare from some thicket on his
 way.
 Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
 And deeper in the wood is gone,—
 For aye the more he sought his way,
 The farther still he went astray,—
 Until he heard the mountains round
 Ring to the laying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-
mouth'd bark

Comes nigher still, and nigher:
Bursts on the path a dark blood-
hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the
ground,

And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and
ire!

He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
But still in act to spring;
When dash'd an archer through the
glade,
And when he saw the hound was
stay'd,

He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not,
ho!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—"Tis a
boy!"

XVI.

The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly
mood,

And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good,
And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more
clear,

No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and
close,

Set off his sun-burn'd face:
Old England's sign, St. George's
cross,

His barret-cap did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;

And his short falchion, sharp and
clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a
deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reach'd scantily to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbish'd sheaf bore he;
His buckler, scarce in breadth a
span,
No larger fence had he;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee;
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-
hound's band.

XVIII.

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer
cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX.

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly
rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come
with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at
need,
And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;
And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
I'll have thee hang'd to feed the
crow!"—

XX.

"Gramercy,* for thy good-will, fair
boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,

And art the son of such a man,
 And ever comest to thy command,
 Our wardens had need to keep
 good order;
 My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
 Thou'lt make them work upon the
 Border.
 Meantime, be pleased to come with
 me,
 For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
 I think our work is well begun,
 When we have taken thy father's
 son."

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
 In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,
 For so the Dwarf his part did play;
 And, in the shape of that young boy,
 He wrought the castle much annoy.
 The comrades of the young Buccleuch
 He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew;
 Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
 He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,
 And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
 He lighted the match of his bande-
 lier,*
 And wofully scorch'd the hackbu-
 teer.†

It may be hardly thought or said,
 The mischief that the urchin made,
 Till many of the castle guess'd
 That the young Baron was possess'd!

XXII.

Well I ween the charm he held
 The noble Ladye had soon dispell'd;
 But she was deeply busied then
 To tend the wounded Deloraine.

Much she wonder'd to find him
 lie,

On the stone threshold stretch'd
 along;

She thought some spirit of the sky
 Had done the bold moss-trooper
 wrong;

Because, despite her precept dread,
 Perchance he in the book had read:
 But the broken lance in his bosom
 stood,
 And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
 And with a charm she staunch'd
 the blood;

She bade the gash be cleansed and
 bound;

No longer by his couch she stood;
 But she has ta'en the broken lance,
 And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
 And salv'd the splinter o'er and
 o'er.‡

William of Deloraine, in trance,
 Whene'er she turn'd it round and
 round,

Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
 Then to her maidens she did say,
 That he should be whole man and
 sound,

Within the course of a night and
 day.

Full long she toil'd; for she did rue
 Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
 'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
 The air was mild, the wind was calm,
 The stream was smooth, the dew was
 balm;

E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
 Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
 Far more fair Margaret loved and
 bless'd

The hour of silence and of rest.
 On the high turret sitting lone,
 She waked at times the lute's soft
 tone;

Touch'd a wild note, and all between
 Thought of the bower of hawthornes
 green.

Her golden hair stream'd free from
 band,

Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
 Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
 For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
 That rises slowly to her ken,

* *Bandelier*, belt for carrying ammunition.
 † *Hackbuteer*, musketeer.

‡ This was called the cure by sympathy.
 Sir Kenelm Digby was wont occasionally to
 practise it.

And, spreading broad its wavering
light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scare could she draw her tighten'd
breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The Warder view'd it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river rung around.
The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared;
And helms and plumes, confusedly
toss'd,
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was reddened by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture
proud,
And issued forth his mandates
loud:—
"On Penchryst glows a bale* of fire,
And there are kindling on Priest-
haughswire;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome,†
every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone
clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliotts and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the Warder of the strife,
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends to
raise."

* A Border beacon.

† *Mount for Branksome* was the gathering word of the Scots.

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty route,
The horsemen gallop'd forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's‡ slumbering
brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret
high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven;
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were
seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleamed on many a dusky tarn,§
Haunted by the lonely earn;||
On many a cairn's grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie
hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
And Lothian heard the Regent's
order,
That all should bowne¶ them for the
Border.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome
rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;

‡ *Need-fire*, beacon.

§ *Tarn*, a mountain lake.

|| *Earn*, a Scottish eagle.

¶ *Bowne*, make ready.

The castle-bell, with backward clang,
 Sent forth the larum peal ;
 Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
 Where massy stone and iron bar
 Were piled on echoing keep and
 tower,
 To whelm the foe with deadly shower ;
 Was frequent heard the changing
 guard,
 And watchword from the sleepless
 ward ;
 While, wearied by the endless din,
 Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd
 within.

XXXI.

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
 Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
 And spoke of danger with a smile ;
 Cheer'd the young knights, and
 council sage
 Held with the chiefs of riper age.
 No tidings of the foe were brought,
 Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
 Nor what in time of truce he sought.
 Some said, that there were thou-
 sands ten ;
 And others ween'd that it was nought
 But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
 Who came to gather in black-mail ;*
 And Liddesdale, with small avail,
 Might drive them lightly back agen.
 So pass'd the anxious night away,
 And welcome was the peep of day.

CEASED the high sound—the listening
 throng
 Applaud the Master of the Song ;
 And marvel much, in helpless age,
 So hard should be his pilgrimage.
 Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
 His wandering toil to share and cheer ;
 No son to be his father's stay,
 And guide him on the rugged way ?
 " Ay, once he had—but he was
 dead!"—
 Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
 And busied himself the strings withal,
 To hude the tear that fain would fall.

* Protection money exacted by free-
 booters.

In solemn measure, soft and slow,
 Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
 The glaring bale-fires blaze no
 more ;
 No longer steel-clad warriors ride
 Along thy wild and willow'd shore ;
 Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
 All, all is peaceful, all is still,
 As if thy waves, since Time was
 born,
 Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
 Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
 Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II.

Unlike the tide of human time,
 Which, though it change in cease-
 less flow,
 Retains each grief, retains each crime
 Its earliest course was doom'd to
 know ;
 And, darker as it downward bears,
 Is stain'd with past and present tears.
 Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
 It still reflects to Memory's eye
 The hour my brave, my only boy,
 Fell by the side of great Dundee. †
 Why, when the volleying musket
 play'd
 Against the bloody Highland blade,
 Why was not I beside him laid !—
 Enough—he died the death of fame!
 Enough—he died with conquering
 Græme.

III.

Now over Border, dale, and fell,
 Full wide and far was terror spread ;
 For pathless march, and mountain cell,
 The peasant left his lowly shed.
 The frighten'd flocks and herds were
 pent
 Beneath the peel's rude battlement ;
 And maids and matrons dropp'd the
 tear,

† Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, slain
 in the battle of Killierankie.

While ready warriors seized the spear.
 From Branksome's towers, the watch-
 man's eye
 Dun wreaths of distant smoke can
 spy,
 Which, curling in the rising sun,
 Show'd southern ravage was begun.

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward
 cried—
 "Prepare ye all for blows and
 blood!
 Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
 Comes wading through the flood.
 Full off the Tynedale snatchers knock
 At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
 It was but last St. Barnabright*
 They sieged him a whole summer
 night,
 But fled at morning; well they knew,
 In vain he never twang'd the yew.
 Right sharp has been the evening
 shower,
 That drove him from his Liddel
 tower;
 And by my faith," the gate-ward said,
 "I think 'twill prove a Warden-
 Raid."†

V.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeo-
 man
 Enter'd the echoing barbican.
 He led a small and shaggy nag,
 That through a bog, from hag to hag, †
 Could bound like any Billhope stag.
 It bore his wife and children twain;
 A half-clothed serf‡ was all their
 train;
 His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-
 brow'd,
 Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
 Laugh'd to her friends among the
 crowd.
 He was of stature passing tall,

* St. Barnabas's day, June 11. It is still
 called Barnaby Bright in Hants, from its
 being generally a bright sunny day.

† An inroad commanded by the Warden in
 person.

‡ The broken ground in a bog.
 § Bondsman.

But sparely form'd, and lean withal;
 A batter'd morion on his brow;
 A leather jack, as fence enow,
 On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
 A border axe behind was slung;
 His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
 Seem'd newly dyed with gore,
 His shafts and bow, of wondrous
 strength,
 His hardy partner bore.

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
 The tidings of the English foe:—
 "Belted Will Howard is marching
 here,
 And hot Lord Dacre with many a
 spear,
 And all the German hackbut-men,
 Who have long lain at Askerten:
 They cross'd the Liddel at curfew
 hour,
 And burn'd my little lonely tower:
 The fiend receive their souls therefor!
 It had not been burnt this year and
 more.
 Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing
 bright,
 Served to guide me on my flight;
 But I was chased the livelong night.
 Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus
 Græme,
 Fast upon my traces came,
 Until I turn'd at Priestthaugh Scrogg,
 And shot their horses in the bog,
 Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
 I had him long at high despite:
 He drove my cows last Eastern's
 night.||

VII.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
 Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
 As far as they could judge by ken,
 Three hours would bring to Teviot's
 strand
 Three thousand armed English-
 men—
 Meanwhile, full many a warlike
 band,

|| Shrove Tuesday, the eve of the great
 Spring fast.

From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
 Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
 There was saddling and mounting
 in haste,
 There was pricking o'er moor and
 lea;
 He that was last at the trysting
 place
 Was but lightly held of his gaye
 ladye.

VIII.

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
 From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky
 height,
 His ready lances Thirlestane brave
 Array'd beneath a banner bright.
 The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims,
 To wreathe his shield, since royal
 James,
 Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,
 The proud distinction grateful gave,
 For faith 'mid feudal jars;
 What time, save Thirlestane alone,
 Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
 Would march to southern wars;
 And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
 Yon sheaf of spears his crest has
 borne;
 Hence his high motto shines re-
 veal'd—
 "Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
 With many a moss-trooper, came
 on:
 And azure in a golden field,
 The stars and crescent graced his
 shield,
 Without the bend of Murdieston.
 Wide lay his lands round Oakwood
 tower,
 And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
 High over Borthwick's mountain
 flood,
 His wood-embosom'd mansion stood,
 In the dark glen, so deep below,
 The herds of plunder'd England low;
 His bold retainers' daily food,
 And bought with danger, blows, and
 blood.
 Marauding chief! his sole delight

The moonlight raid, the morning
 fight;
 Not even the Flower of Yarrow's
 charms,
 In youth, might tame his rage for
 arms;
 And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
 And still his brows the helmet
 press'd,
 Albeit the blanched locks below
 Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow;
 Five stately warriors drew the
 sword
 Before their father's band;
 A braver knight than Harden's lord
 Ne'er belted on a brand.*

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
 Came trooping down the Todshaw-
 hill;
 By the sword they won their land,
 And by the sword they hold it still.
 Harken, Ladye, to the tale,
 How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
 Earl Morton was lord of that valley
 fair,
 The Beattisons were his vassals there.
 The Earl was gentle, and mild of
 mood,
 The vassals were warlike, and fierce,
 and rude;
 High of heart, and haughty of word,
 Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
 The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
 Homage and seignory to claim:
 Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot † he
 sought,
 Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a
 vassal ought."
 —"Dear to me is my bonny white
 steed,
 Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;
 Lord and Earl though thou be, I
 trow,
 I can rein Bucksfoot better than
 thou."
 Word on word gave fuel to fire,

* This knight was the ancestor of Sir Walter Scott.

† The feudal superior, in certain cases, was entitled to the best horse of the vassal, in name of Heriot, or Herczell.

Till so highly blazed the Beattisons'
 ire,
 But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
 The vassals there their lord had slain.
 Sore he plied both whip and spur,
 As he urged his steed through Esk-
 dale muir;
 And it fell down a weary weight,
 Just on the threshold of Branksome
 gate.

XI.

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
 Full fain avenged would he be,
 In haste to Branksome's Lord he
 spoke,
 Saying—"Take these traitors to thy
 yoke;
 For a cast of hawks, and a purse of
 gold,
 All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and
 hold:
 Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons'
 clan
 If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
 But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
 For he lent me his horse to escape
 upon."
 A glad man then was Branksome bold,
 Down he flung him the purse of gold;
 To Eskdale soon he spur'd amain,
 And with him five hundred riders
 has ta'en.
 He left his merry men in the mist of
 the hill,
 And bade them hold them close and
 still;
 And alone he wended to the plain,
 To meet with the Galliard and all his
 train.
 To Gilbert the Galliard thus he
 said:—
 "Know thou me for thy liege-lord
 and head,
 Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
 For Scotts play best at the roughest
 game.
 Give me in peace my heriot due,
 Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt
 rue,
 If my horn I three times wind,
 Eskdale shall long have the sound in
 mind."

XII.

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in
 scorn;
 "Little care we for thy winded horn.
 Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot,
 To yield his steed to a haughty
 Scot.
 Wend thou to Branksome back on
 foot,
 With rusty spur and miry boot."—
 He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
 That the dun deer started at fair
 Craikcross:
 He blew again so loud and clear,
 Through the grey mountain-mist
 there did lances appear:
 And the third blast rang with such a
 din,
 That the echoes answer'd from Pen-
 tounlinn,
 And all his riders came lightly in.
 Then had you seen a gallant shock,
 When saddles were emptied, and
 lances broke!
 For each scornful word the Galliard
 had said,
 A Beattison on the field was laid.
 His own good sword the Chieftain
 drew,
 And he bore the Galliard through
 and through:
 Where the Beattison's blood mix'd
 with the rill,
 The Galliard's-Haugh men call it
 still.
 The Scotts have scatter'd the Beatti-
 son clan,
 In Eskdale they left but one landed
 man.
 The valley of Eske, from the mouth
 to the source,
 Was lost and won for that bonny
 white horse.

XIII.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw
 came,
 And warriors more than I may name;
 From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-
 swair,
 From Woodhouselie to Chester-
 glen.

Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellen-
den.

And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.

The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride
arose:

She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's
friend,

And learn to face his foes.

"The boy is ripe to look on war;

I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar

The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:

Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his
weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's
shield."

XIV.

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a
tear,

And moan'd and plain'd in manner
wild.

The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the
child,

That wot to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very
shame:—

"Hence! ere the clan his faintness
view;

Hence with the weakling to Buc-
cleuch!—

Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our
line,

That coward should e'er be son of
mine!"—

XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.

Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.

It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they
cross'd,

The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in
dream,

And fled, and shouted, "Lost!
lost! lost!"

Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through
and through.

Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon heal'd
again,

Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he
stood,

That looks o'er Branksome's towers
and wood;

And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching southern
foe.

Through the dark wood, in mingled
tone,

Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;

And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;

And, glistening through the haw-
thorns green,

Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the
ground,

Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely
round;

Behind, in close array, and fast,

The Kendal archers, all in green,
 Obedient to the bugal blast,
 Advancing from the wood were
 seen.
 To back and guard the archer band,
 Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand:
 A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
 With kirtles white, and crosses red,
 Array'd beneath the banner tall,
 That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd
 wall;
 And minstrels, as they march'd in
 order,
 Play'd "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells
 on the Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
 The mercenaries, firm and slow,
 Moved on to fight, in dark array,
 By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
 Who brought the band from distant
 Rhine,
 And sold their blood for foreign pay.
 The camp their home, their law the
 sword,
 They knew no country, own'd no lord:
 They were not arm'd like England's
 sons,
 But bore the levin-darting guns;
 Buff coats, all frounced and 'broider'd
 o'er,
 And morsin-horns* and scarfs they
 wore;
 Each better knee was bared, to aid
 The warriors in the escalade;
 All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
 Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,
 And louder still the minstrels blew,
 When, from beneath the greenwood
 tree,
 Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
 His men-at-arms, with glaive and
 spear,
 Brought up the battle's glittering rear,
 There many a youthful knight, full
 keen
 To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;

* Powder flasks.

With favour in his crest, or glove,
 Memorial of his lady-love.
 So rode they forth in fair array,
 Till full their lengthen'd lines display;
 Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
 And cried, "St. George, for merry
 England!"

XX.

Now every English eye, intent
 On Branksome's armed towers was
 bent;
 So near they were, that they might
 know
 The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
 On battlement and bartizan
 Gleam'd aze, and spear, and partisan;
 Falcon and culver,† on each tower,
 Stood prompt their deadly hail to
 shower;
 And flashing armour frequent broke
 From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
 Where upon tower and turret head,
 The seething pitch and molten lead
 Reek'd, like a witch's caldron red.
 While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
 The wicket opes, and from the wall
 Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
 His white beard o'er his breast-plate
 spread;
 Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
 He ruled his eager courser's gait;
 Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to
 prance,
 And, high curvetting, slow advance:
 In sign of truce, his better hand
 Display'd a peeled willow wand;
 His squire, attending in the rear,
 Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.‡
 When they espied him riding out,
 Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
 Sped to the front of their array,
 To hear what this old knight should
 say.

† Ancient pieces of artillery.

‡ A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when any one broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded.—See LESLEY.

XXII.

“Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland
brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye redes you swith* return;
And if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest,
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumber-
land.”—

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:
“May't please thy Dame, Sir Senes-
chal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
Both why we came, and when we go.”
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
The lion argent deck'd his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV.

“It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.†
We claim from thee William of Delor-
aine,
That he may suffer march-treason
pain.

* Swith, instantly.

† An asylum for outlaws.

It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried‡ the lands of Richard Mus-
grave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warri-
son,§
And storm and spoil thy garrison:
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be
bred.”

XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high;
Implored for aid each well-known
face,
And strove to seek the Dame's em-
brace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior
frown'd;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied in dauntless mood:

XXVI.

“Say to your Lords of high emprise,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-
treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave for his honour's
sake,
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin
and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas'
sword,
When English blood swell'd Ancram's
ford;
And but Lord Dacre's steed was
wight,

‡ Plundered.

§ Note of assault.

And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubb'd a
knight.

For the young heir of Branksome's
line,

God be his aid, and God be mine;
Through me no friend shall meet his
doom;

Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy Lords their purpose
urge,

Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake*
dirge,

Our moat, the grave where they
shall lie."

XXVII.

Proud she look'd round, applause to
claim—

Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of
flame;

His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,

"St. Mary for the young Buc-
cleuch!"

The English war-cry answer'd wide,
And forward bent each southern
spear;

Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was
blown:—

But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII.

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless
said,

"What treason has your march be-
tray'd?

What make you here, from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought,
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-
schaw;†

The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn
grain;

And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men
good,

Beneath the eagle and the rood;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviot-
dale,

Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.

An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;
But still my heart was with merry
England,

And cannot brook my country's
wrong;

And hard I've spurr'd all night to
show

The mustering of the coming foe."

XXIX.

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre
cried;

"For soon yon crest, my father's
pride,

That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers
display'd,

Shall mock the rescue's lingering
aid!"—

Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX.

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly
hear,

Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thou-
sands three,

Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:

* Watching a corpse all night.

† *Weapon-schaw*—military gathering of a
chief's followers, or the army of a county.

Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
 In single fight, and, if he gain,
 He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,
 'Tis but a single warrior lost:
 The rest, retreating as they came,
 Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
 His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
 And yet his forward step he staid,
 And slow and sullenly obey'd.
 But ne'er again the Border side
 Did these two lords in friendship
 ride;
 And this slight discontent, men say,
 Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
 Before the castle took his stand;
 His trumpet call'd, with parleying
 strain,

The leaders of the Scottish band;
 And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
 Stout Deloraine to single fight;
 A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
 And thus the terms of fight he
 said:—

"If in the lists good Musgrave's
 sword

Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
 Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's
 Lord,

Shall hostage for his clan remain:
 If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
 The boy his liberty shall have,

Howe'er it falls, the English band,
 Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
 In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
 Shall straight retreat to Cumber-
 land."

XXXIII.

Unconscious of the near relief,
 The proffer pleased each Scottish
 chief,

Though much the Ladye sage gain-
 say'd;

For though their hearts were brave
 and true,

From Jedwood's recent sack they
 knew,

How tardy was the Regent's aid:
 And you may guess the noble Dame
 Durst not the secret prescience
 own,
 Sprung from the art she might not
 name,
 By which the coming help was
 known.

Closed was the compact, and agreed
 That lists should be enclosed with
 speed,

Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
 They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
 On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
 At the fourth hour from peep of
 dawn;

When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
 Or else a champion in his stead,
 Should for himself and chieftain
 stand,
 Against stout Musgrave, hand to
 hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
 Full many minstrels sing and say,
 Such combat should be made on
 horse,

On foaming steed, in full career,
 With brand to aid, when as the spear
 Should shiver in the course:

But he, the jovial Harper, taught
 Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
 In guise which now I say;

He knew each ordinance and clause
 Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-
 laws,

In the old Douglas' day.
 He brook'd not, he, that scoffing
 tongue

Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
 Or call his song untrue:

For this, when they the goblet plied,
 And such rude taunt had chafed his
 pride,

The Bard of Reull he slew.
 On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
 And tuneful hands were stain'd with
 blood;

Where still the thorn's white branches
 wave,

Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb;

How Ousenam's maidens tore their
hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and
dim,

And wrung their hands for love of
him,

Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died!—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

HE paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbour now the
hare;

Of manners, long since changed and
gone;

Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their
name,

And twined round some new min-
ion's head

The fading wreath for which they
bled;

In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's
verse

Could call them from their marble
hearse.

The Harper smiled, well-pleased;
for ne'er

Was flattery lost on poet's ear:
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:

Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived
blaze.

Smiled then, well-pleased, the
Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

CALL it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worship-
per,

And celebrates his obsequies:
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes
sigh,

And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the
gale,

Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her
lot,

That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the
tear

Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heaped with
dead;

Mounts the wild blast that sweeps
amain,

And shrieks along the battle-plain.
The Chief, whose antique crownlet
long

Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty
throne,

Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
 His ashes undistinguish'd lie,
 His place, his power, his memory die:
 His groans the lonely caverns fill,
 His tears of rage impel the rill:
 All mourn the Minstrel's harp un-
 strung,
 Their name unknown, their praise
 unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
 The terms of truce were scarcely
 made,
 When they could spy from Brank-
 some's towers,
 The advancing march of martial
 powers.
 Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
 And trampling steeds were faintly
 heard;
 Bright spears, above the columns
 dun,
 Glanced momentary to the sun;
 And feudal banners fair display'd
 The bands that moved to Brank-
 some's aid.

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
 From the fair Middle Marches
 came;
 The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
 Announcing Douglas, dreaded
 name!
 Vails not to tell what steeds did
 spurn,
 Where the Seven Spears of Wedder-
 burne*
 Their men in battle-order set;
 And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
 That tamed of yore the sparkling
 crest
 Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
 Nor list I say what hundreds more,
 From the rich Merse and Lammer-
 more,
 And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
 Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar,

* Sir David Home of Wedderburn, who was slain in the fatal battle of Flodden, left seven sons, who were called the Seven Spears of Wedderburne.

And Hepburn's mingled banners
 come,
 Down the steep mountain glittering
 far,
 And shouting still, "A Home! a
 Home!"

V.

Now squire and knight, from Brank-
 some sent,
 On many a courteous message went;
 To every chief and lord they paid
 Meet thanks for prompt and power-
 ful aid;
 And told them,—how a truce was
 made,
 And how a day of fight was ta'en
 'Twixt Musgrave and stout Delo-
 raine;
 And how the Ladye pray'd them
 dear,
 That all would stay the fight to see,
 And deign, in love and courtesy,
 To taste of Branksome cheer.
 Nor, while they bade to feast each
 Scot,
 Were England's noble Lords forgot.
 Himself, the hoary Seneschal
 Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
 Those gallant foes to Branksome
 Hall.
 Accepted Howard, than whom knight
 Was never dubb'd, more bold in fight;
 Nor, when from war and armour free,
 More famed for stately courtesy:
 But angry Dacre rather chose
 In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you
 ask,
 How these two hostile armies met?
 Deeming it were no easy task
 To keep the truce which here was
 set;
 Where martial spirits, all on fire,
 Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
 By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
 By habit, and by nation, foes,
 They met on Teviot's strand;
 They met and sate them mingled
 down,
 Without a threat, without a frown,

As brothers meet in foreign land:
 The hands, the spear that lately
 grasp'd,
 Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp'd,
 Were interchanged in greeting
 dear;
 Visors were raised, and faces shown,
 And many a friend, to friend made
 known,
 Partook of social cheer.
 Some drove the jolly bowl about;
 With dice and draughts some chas-
 ed the day;
 And some, with many a merry shout,
 In riot, revelry, and rout,
 Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII.

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
 Or sign of war be seen,
 Those bands, so fair together ranged,
 Those hands, so frankly inter-
 changed,
 Had dyed with gore the green:
 The merry shout by Teviot-side
 Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
 And in the groan of death:
 And whingers* now in friendship
 bare,
 The social meal to part and share,
 Had found a bloody sheath.
 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden
 change
 Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
 In the old Border-day:
 But yet on Branksome's towers and
 town,
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.

VIII.

The blithesome signs of wassel gay
 Decay'd not with the dying day;
 Soon through the latticed windows
 tall
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
 Divided square by shafts of stone,
 Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
 Nor less the gilded rafters rang
 With merry harp and beakers'clang:

*Large knives.

And frequent, on the darkening
 plain,
 Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle
 ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watchword of
 their clan;
 And revellers, o'er their bowls, pro-
 claim
 Douglas or Dacre's conquering name.

IX.

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
 At length the various clamours
 died:
 And you might hear, from Branksome
 hill,
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
 Save when the changing sentinel
 The challenge of his watch could tell;
 And save, where, through the dark
 profound,
 The clanging axe and hammer's
 sound
 Rung from the nether lawn;
 For many a busy hand toil'd there,
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to
 square,
 The lists' dread barriers to prepare
 Against the morrow's dawn.

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
 Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
 Full many a stifled sigh;
 For many a noble warrior strove
 To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
 And many a bold ally.—
 With throbbing head and anxious
 heart,
 All in her lonely bower apart,
 In broken sleep she lay;
 By times, from silken couch she rose;
 While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
 She view'd the dawning day;
 Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
 First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
 Which in the tower's tall shadow
 lay;

Where coursers' clang, and stamp,
and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his
tread,

A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumed
head—

Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hos-
tile towers,

With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not
speak—

Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Nor Margaret's yet more precious
tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.

Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he
cross'd,

For all the vassalage:
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure
eyes!

She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she
strove,

And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had

To bring this meeting round,
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite

In such no joy is found;
And oft I've deem'd, perchance he
thought

Their erring passion might have
wrought

Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant
Knight,

And to the gentle ladye bright,
Disgrace, and loss of fame.

But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has
given

To man alone beneath the heaven;
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted,
fly;

It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;

It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to
mind,

In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her
Knight,

To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port* aroused
each clan;

In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances
stood,

Like blasted pines in Etrick wood;
To Branksome many a look they
threw,

The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast,
About the knight each favour'd most.

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirles-
taine:

They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was
bent;

* A martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes.

But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from
pain,

In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful
knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims
withdrew.

XVI.

When for the lists they sought the
plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walk'd,
And much, in courteous phrase, they
talk'd

Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slash'd and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers
still

Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,

Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:
White was her whimple, and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale

Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broider'd
rein.

He deem'd she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson
placed,
The Dame and she the barriers
graced.

XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Buc-
cleuch,

An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present
plight,

So much he longed to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they
wield,

As marshals of the mortal field;
While to each knight their care as-
sign'd

Like vantage of the sun and wind.
The heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's
name,

That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or
word,

Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Herald spoke:

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely
born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despicable scathe and
scorn.

He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good
cause!"

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

"Here standeth William of Delor-
aine,
Good knight and true, of noble
strain.

Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd
his coat;
And that, so help him God
above!

He will on Musgrave's body
prove,
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE.

"Forward, brave champions, to the
fight!
Sound trumpets!"—

LORD HOME.

—"God defend the right!"
Then, Teviot! how thine echoes
rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet
clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list with shield poised
high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many
a wound;
For desperate was the strife and
long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening
knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flash-
ing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet
clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-
horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.—

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody
plain!
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave,
no!
Thence never shalt thou rise
again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly
hand
Undo the visor's barred band,

Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to
gasp!—
O, bootless aid!—haste holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to
heaven!

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped:—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran;
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man;
Loose waved his silver beard and
hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in
prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody
sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's
o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no
more.

XXIV.

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Marked not the shouts, felt not the
grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild sur-
prise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man.
Who downward from the castle ran:
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,
As dizzy, and in pain;

And all, upon the armed ground,
 Knew William of Deloraine!
 Each ladye sprung from seat with
 speed;
 Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
 "And who art thou," they cried,
 "Who hast this battle fought and
 won?"—
 His plumed helm was soon undone—
 "Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
 For this fair prize I've fought and
 won,"—
 And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
 And often press'd him to her breast;
 For, under all her dauntless show,
 Her heart had throbb'd at every
 blow;
 Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she
 greet,
 Though low he kneeled at her feet.
 He lists not tell what words were
 made,
 What Douglas, Home, and Howard,
 said—
 —For Howard was a generous foe—
 And how the clan united pray'd
 The Ladye would the feud forego,
 And deign to bless the nuptial hour
 Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's
 Flower.

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
 Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
 Then broke her silence stern and
 still,—
 "Not you, but Fate, has van-
 quish'd me.
 Their influence kindly stars may
 shower
 On Teviot's tide and Branksome's
 tower,
 For pride is quell'd, and love is
 free."—
 She took fair Margaret by the hand,
 Who, breathless, trembling, scarce
 might stand,
 That hand to Cranstoun's lord
 gave she:—
 "As I am true to thee and thine,

Do thou be true to me and mine!
 This clasp of love our bond shall be;
 For this is your betrothing day,
 And all these noble lords shall stay,
 To grace it with their company."

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
 Much of the story she did gain;
 How Cranstoun fought with Delo-
 raine,
 And of his page, and of the Book
 Which from the wounded knight he
 took;
 And how he sought her castle high,
 That morn, by help of gramarye;
 How, in Sir William's armour dight,
 Stolen by his page, while slept the
 knight,
 He took on him the single fight.
 But half his tale he left unsaid,
 And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
 Cared not the Ladye to betray
 Her mystic arts in view of day;
 But well she thought, ere midnight
 came,
 Of that strange page the pride to
 tame,
 From his foul hands the Book to save,
 And send it back to Michael's
 grave.—
 Needs not to tell each tender word
 'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Crans-
 toun's lord;
 Nor how she told of former woes,
 And how her bosom fell and rose,
 While he and Musgrave bandied
 blows.—
 Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
 One day, fair maids, you'll know
 them well.

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine, some chance
 Had waken'd from his death-like
 trance;
 And taught that, in the listed
 plain,
 Another, in his arms and shield,
 Against fierce Musgrave axe did
 wield,
 Under the name of Deloraine.
 Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,

And hence his presence scared the
 clan,
 Who held him for some fleeting
 wraith,*
 And not a man of blood and breath.
 Not much this new ally he loved,
 Yet, when he saw what hap had
 proved,
 He greeted him right heartilie:
 He would not waken old debate,
 For he was void of rancorous hate,
 Though rude and scant of cour-
 tesy;
 In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
 Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
 Or, as was meet for deadly feud.
 He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart
 blow,
 Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe;
 And so 'twas seen of him c'en now,
 When on dead Musgrave he
 look'd down;
 Grief darken'd on his rugged
 brow,
 Though half disguised with a
 frown;
 And thus, while sorrow bent his
 head,
 His foeman's epitaph he made.

XXIX.

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou
 here!
 I ween my deadly enemy;
 For, if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
 And when I lay in dungeon dark,
 Of Naworth Castle, long months
 three,
 Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
 And, Musgrave, could our fight be
 tried,
 And thou wert now alive as I,
 No mortal man should us divide,
 Till one, or both of us, did die;
 Yet rest thee God! for well I know
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
 In all the northern counties here,
 Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and
 spear,

* The spectral apparition of a living person.

Thou wert the best to follow gear!
 'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
 To see how thou the chase could'st
 wind,
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his
 way,
 And with the bugle rouse the fray!
 I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
 Dark Musgrave were alive again."

XXX.

So mourn'd he, till Lord Daere's band
 Were bowning back to Cumberland.
 They raised brave Musgrave from the
 field,
 And laid him on his bloody shield;
 On levell'd lances, four and four,
 By turns the noble burden bore.
 Before, at times, upon the gale,
 Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive
 wail;
 Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
 Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
 Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
 With trailing pikes the spearmen
 trode;
 And thus the gallant knight they bore,
 Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
 Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty
 nave,
 And laid him in his father's grave.

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd
 the song.
 The mimic march of death prolong;
 Now seems it far, and now a-near,
 Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
 Now seems some mountain side to
 sweep,
 Now faintly dies in valley deep;
 Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
 Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
 Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
 Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
 Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
 Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
 Wander a poor and thankless soil,
 When the more generous Southern
 Land

Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
 His only friend, his harp, was dear,
 Liked not to hear it ranked so high
 Above his flowing poesy:
 Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
 Misprised the land he loved so dear;
 High was the sound, as thus again
 The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

BREATHES there the man, with soul so
 dead,
 Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land!
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him
 burn'd,
 As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,
 From wandering on a foreign
 strand!
 If such there breathe, go, mark him
 well,
 For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
 High though his titles, proud his
 name,
 Boundless his wealth as wish can
 claim;
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch, concentred all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust, from whence he
 sprung,
 Unwept, unhonor'd, and unsung.

II.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child!
 Land of brown heath and shaggy
 wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood,
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band,
 That knits me to thy rugged strand!
 Still, as I view each well-known scene,
 Think what is now, and what hath
 been,
 Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
 Sole friends thy woods and streams
 were left;
 And thus I love them better still,

Even in extremity of ill.
 By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
 Though none should guide my feeble
 way;
 Still feel the breeze down Ettrick
 break,
 Although it chill my wither'd cheek;
 Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
 Though there, forgotten and alone,
 The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III.

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome
 Hall
 The Minstrels came, at festive call;
 Trooping they came, from near and
 far,
 The jovial priests of mirth and war;
 Alike for feast and fight prepared,
 Battle and banquet both they shared.
 Of late, before each martial clan,
 They blew their death-note in the van,
 But now, for every merry mate,
 Rose the portecullis' iron grate;
 They sound the pipe, they strike the
 string,
 They dance, they revel, and they sing,
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.

Me lists not at this tide declare
 The splendour of the spousal rite,
 How muster'd in the chapel fair
 Both maid and matron, squire and
 knight;
 Me lists not tell of owches rare,
 Of mantles green, and braided hair,
 And kirtles furr'd with miniver;
 What plumage waved the altar round,
 How spurs and ringing chainlets
 sound;
 And hard it were for bard to speak
 The changeful hue of Margaret's
 cheek;
 That lovely hue which comes and
 flies,
 As awe and shame alternate rise!

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye
 high
 Chapel or altar came not nigh;
 Nor durst the rights of spousal grace,

So much she fear'd each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well

She wrought not by forbidden spell;
For mighty words and signs have power

O'er sprites in planetary hour:
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,

Who tamper with such dangerous art.
But this for faithful truth I say,

The Ladye by the altar stood,

Of sable velvet her array,

And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,

Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;

A merlin sat upon her wrist
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.

Steward and squire, with heedful haste,

Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,

The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,

And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,

And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;*
O'er ptarmigan and vension,

The priest had spoke his bension.
Then rose the riot and the din,

Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,

Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors

quaff'd;
Loudly they spoke, and loudly

laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone

more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.

But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

* Flights of wild swans are often seen on St. Mary's Lake, which is at the head of the Yarrow.

The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,

The clamour join'd with whistling scream,

And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,

In concert with the stag-hound's yells.

Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the

Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply

And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,

Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,

To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,

By nature fierce, and warm with wine,

And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had

lost,
High words to words succeeding

still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunt-

hill;
A hot and hardy Rutherford,

Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.

He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds

away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas

rose,
The kindling discord to compose:

Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove, and shook his

head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,

Stout Conrade, cold, and drench'd in blood,

His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;

Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and

sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,

That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-
Braes;*

And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it
round.

To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"—
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown
ale;

While shout the riders every one;
Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their
clan,

Since old Buccleuch the name did
gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was
ta'en.

IX.

The wily page, with vengeful
thought,

Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.

First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his
wife;

Then, shunning still his powerful
arm,

At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest
cheer,

Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venom'd wound, and festering
joint,

* The person bearing this redoubtable *nom de guerre* was an Elliott, and resided at Thorleshope, in Liddesdale. He occurs in the list of Border riders, in 1597.

Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and
spurn'd,
And board and flagons overturn'd.
Riot and clamour wild began;
Back to the hall the urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost!
lost! lost!"

X.

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert
Græme,

The Minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so
well

Within the Land Debateable.
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made
their broth,

In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as Nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.

ALBERT GRÆME.

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle
wall,*)

And she would marry a Scottish
knight,
For love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle
wall;

But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of
all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Car-
lisle wall;

Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and
lea,

*This burden is from an old Scottish song.

Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII.

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall.)

When dead, in her true love's arms,
she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all!

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:—

So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall.)

And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall.)

Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII.

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renown'd in haughty Henry's court:

There rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!

The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?

His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,

And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.

His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
And deem'd, that spirits from on high,

Round where some hermit saint was laid,

Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,

To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,

When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.

He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,

And faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favorite, he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAVER.

'Twas all-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;

He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,

Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,

When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,

To show to him the ladye of his heart,

Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim;

Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,

That he should see her form in life and limb,

And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII.

Dark was the vaulted room of grammarie,

To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,

Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
 A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
 On mystic implements of magic might;
 On cross, and character, and talisman,
 And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
 For'fiful was the lustre, pale and wan,
 As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
 Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
 And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
 Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream,
 Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
 To form a lordly and a lofty room,
 Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
 Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
 And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
 The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
 O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
 Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
 All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
 And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,
 Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find;—
 That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptured line,
 That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine!

XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
 And swept the goodly vision all away—
 So royal envy roll'd the murky storm
 O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
 Thbujealous, ruthlesstyrant! Heaven repay
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
 The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,
 The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI.

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs prolonged
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
 These hated Henry's name as death,
 And those still held the ancient faith.—
 Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
 Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair;
 St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
 Had with that lord to battle come.
 Harold was born where restless seas
 Howlround the storm-swept Orcades;
 Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
 Still nods their palace to its fall,
 Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirk-wall!—
 Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,
 As if grim Odin rode her wave;
 And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
 For all of wonderful and wild
 Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful
 In these rude isles might fancy cull;
 For thither came, in times afar,

Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and
blood,

Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave.
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous
tale;

And many a Runic column high
Had witness'd grim idolatry;
And thus had Harold, in his youth,
Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme un-
couth,—

Of that Sea-Snake* tremendous
curl'd,

Whose monstrous circle girds the
world;

Of those dread Maids† whose hideous
yell

Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of Chiefs, who, guided through the
gloom,

By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrench'd from
corpses' hold,

Waked the deaf tomb with war's
alarms,

And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold
came,

Where, by sweet glen and greenwood
tree,

He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O listen, listen, ladies gay!

No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle;

—“Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant
crew!

* For the Sea-Snake, see the “Edda,” or
Mallet's “Northern Antiquities,” p. 445.

† The Valkyrior or Scandinavian Fates, or
Fatal Sisters.

And, gentle ladye, deign to stay,
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“The blackening wave is edged with
white:

To inch‡ and rock the sea-mews
fly;

The fishers have heard the Water-
Sprite,

Whose screams forbode that wreck
is nigh.

“Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye
gay:

Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:
“Why cross the gloomy firth to-
day?”—

“’Tis not because Lord Lindesay's
heir

To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

“’Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides
well,

But that my sire the wine will chide,
If ’tis not filled by Rosabelle.”—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to
gleam;

’Twas broader than the watch-fire's
light,

And redder than the bright moon-
beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen,

’Twas seen from Dryden's groves of
oak,

And seen from cavern'd Hawthorn-
den.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd
lie,

Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

‡ Inch, an island.

Seem'd all on fire, within, around,
 Deep sacristy and altar's pale,
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
 And glimmer'd all the dead men's
 mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
 Blazed every rose-carved buttress
 fair—
 So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
 The lordly line of high St. Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons
 bold
 Lie buried within that proud
 chapelle;
 Each one the holy vault doth hold--
 But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each St. Clair was buried there,
 With candle, with book, and with
 knell;
 But the sea-caves rung, and the wild
 winds sung,
 The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
 Scarce mark'd the guests the
 darken'd hall,
 Though, long before the sinking day,
 A wondrous shade involv'd them
 all;

It was not eddying mist or fog,
 Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;
 Of no eclipse had sages told;
 And yet, as it came on apace,
 Each one could scarce his neigh-
 bour's face,

Could scarce his own stretch'd
 hand behold.

A secret horror check'd the feast,
 And chill'd the soul of every guest;
 Even the high Dame stood half
 aghast,

She knew some evil on the blast,
 The elfish page fell to the ground,
 And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found!
 found! found!"

XXV.

Then, sudden, through the darken'd
 air,
 A flash of lightning came;

So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
 The castle seem'd on flame.
 Glanced every rafter of the hall,
 Glanced every shield upon the wall;
 Each trophied beam, each sculptured
 stone,
 Were instant seen, and instant gone;
 Full through the guests' bedazzled
 band
 Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,
 And fill'd the hall with smouldering
 smoke,

As on the elfish page it broke.
 It broke, with thunder, long and
 loud,
 Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the
 proud,—
 From sea to sea the larum rung;
 On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle
 withal,
 To arms the startled warders
 sprung,
 When ended was the dreadful roar,
 The elvish dwarf was seen no more.

XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome
 Hall,

Some saw a sight, not seen by all;
 That dreadful voice was heard by
 some,

Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN,
 COME!"

-And on the spot where burst the
 brand,

Just where the page had flung
 him down,

Some saw an arm, and some a
 hand,

And some the waving of a gown.

The guests in silence pray'd and
 shook,

And terror dimm'd each lofty look.

But none of all the astonish'd train
 Was so dismay'd as Deloraine;

His blood did freeze, his brain did
 burn,

'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er
 return;

For he was speechless, ghastly,
 wan,

Like him of whom the story ran,

Who spoke the spectre-hound in
Man,

At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering
cold—

That he had seen, right certainly,
*A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldrick bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea ;*
And knew—but how it matter'd
not—

It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling, heard the wondrous
tale;

No sound was made, no word was
spoke,

Till noble Angus silence broke;

And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.

Then each, to ease his troubled
breast

To some bless'd saint his prayers
address'd :

Some to St. Moden made their vows,

Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,

Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,

Some to our Ladye of the Isle ;

Each did his patron witness make,

That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells
should toll,

All for the weal of Michael's soul.

While vows were ta'en, and prayers
were pray'd,

'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,

Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII.

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell ;

Nor how brave sons and daughters
fair

Bless'd Teviot's Flower and Cran-
stoun's heir :

After such dreadful scene, 'twere
vain

To wake the note of mirth again.

More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go ;
The standers-by might hear uneth,*
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn
breath,

Through all the lengthen'd row :
No lordly look, nor martial stride,
Gone was their glory, sunk their
pride,

Forgotten their renown ;
Silent and slow, like ghosts they
glide

To the high altar's hallow'd side,

And there they knelt them down :
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave ;
Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead ;
From many a garnish'd niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs
frown'd.

XXX.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,

In long procession came ;
Taper and host, and book they bear,
And holy banner, flourish'd fair
With the Redeemer's name.

Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred Abbot stretch'd his
hand,

And bless'd them as they kneel'd ;
With holy cross he sign'd them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in
hall,

And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers
were said,

And solemn requiem for the dead ;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,

* Scarcely hear

For the departed spirit's weal ;
 And ever in the office close
 The hymn of intercession rose ;
 And far the echoing aisles prolong
 The awful burden of the song,—

DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA ;
 While the pealing organ rung.
 Were it meet with sacred strain
 To close my lay, so light and vain,
 Thus the holy Fathers sung :—

XXXI.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass
 away,
 What power shall be the sinner's
 stay?
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?
 When, shrivelling like a parched
 scroll,
 The flaming heavens together roll ;
 When louder yet, and yet more dread,
 Swells the high trump that wakes
 the dead,
 Oh ! on that day, that wrathful day,
 When man to judgment wakes from
 clay,
 Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
 Though heaven and earth shall pass
 away !

HUSH'D is the harp—the Minstrel
 gone.

And did he wander forth alone?
 Alone, in indigence and age,
 To linger out his pilgrimage?
 No; close beneath proud Newark's
 tower,

Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
 A simple hut; but there was seen
 The little garden hedged with green,
 The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
 There shelter'd wanderers, by the
 blaze,

Oft heard the tale of other days;
 For much he loved to ope his door,
 And give the aid he begg'd before.
 So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
 When summer smiled on sweet Bow-
 hill,

And July's eve, with balmy breath,
 Waved the blue-bells on Newark
 heath;

When thro'tles sung in Harehead-
 shaw,

And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
 And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's
 oak,

The aged Harper's soul awoke!
 Then would he sing achievements
 high,

And circumstance of chivalry,
 Till the rapt traveller would stay,
 Forgetful of the closing day;
 And noble youths, the strain to hear,
 Forsook the hunting of the deer;
 And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
 Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

ROKEBY.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE Moon is in her summer glow,
But hoarse and high the breezes blow,
And, racking o'er her face, the cloud
Varies the tincture of her shroud;
On Barnard's towers, and Tees's
stream,

She changes as a guilty dream,
When conscience, with remorse and
fear,

Goads sleeping Fancy's wild career.
Her light seems now the blush of
shame,

Seems now fierce anger's darker flame,
Shifting that shade, to come and go,
Like apprehension's hurried glow;
Then sorrow's livery dims the air,
And dies in darkness, like despair.

Such varied hues the warder sees
Reflected from the woodland Tees,
Then from old Baliol's tower looks
forth,

Sees the clouds mustering in the
north,

Hears, upon turret-roof and wall,
By fits the plashing rain-drop fall,
Lists to the breeze's boding sound,
And wraps his shaggy mantle round.

• II.

Those towers, which in the changeful
gleam

Throw murky shadows on the stream,
Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
The emotions of whose troubled
breast,

In wild and strange confusion driven,
Rival the flitting rack of heaven.

Ere sleep stern OSWALD's senses tied,
Oft had he changed his weary side,
Composed his limbs, and vainly
sought

By effort strong to banish thought.
Sleep came at length, but with a train

Of feelings true and fancies vain,
Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
The expected future with the past.
Conscience, anticipating time,
Already rues the enacted crime,
And calls her furies forth, to shake
The sounding scourge and hissing
snake;

While her poor victim's outward
throes

Bear witness to his mental woes,
And show what lesson may be read
Beside a sinner's restless bed.

III.

Thus Oswald's labouring feelings trace
Strange changes in his sleeping face,
Rapid and ominous as these
With which the moonbeams tinge the
Tees.

There might be seen of shame the
blush,

There anger's dark and fiercer flush,
While the perturbed sleeper's hand
Seen'd grasping dagger-knife, or
brand.

Relax'd that grasp, the heavy sigh,
The tear in the half-opening eye,
The pallid cheek and brow, confess'd
That grief was busy in his breast;
Nor paused that mood—a sudden start
Impell'd the life-blood from the heart:
Features convulsed, and mutterings
dread,

Show terror reigns in sorrow's stead.
That pang the painful slumber brok'^e,
And Oswald with a start awoke.

IV.

He woke, and fear'd again to close
His eyelids in such dire repose;
He woke,—to watch the lamp, and
tell

From hour to hour the castle-bell.
Or listen to the owlet's cry,
Or the sad breeze that whistles by,

Or catch, by fits, the tuneless rhyme
 With which the warder cheats the
 time,
 And envying think, how, when the
 sun
 Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
 Couch'd on his straw, and fancy-free,
 He sleeps like careless infancy.

V.

Far townward sounds a distant tread,
 And Oswald, starting from his bed,
 Hath caught it, though no human
 ear,
 Unsharpen'd by revenge and fear,
 Could e'er distinguish horse's clank,
 Until it reach'd the castle bank.
 Now nigh and plain the sound ap-
 pears,
 The warder's challenge now he hears,
 Then clanking chains and levers tell,
 That o'er the moat the drawbridge
 fell,
 And, in the castle court below,
 Voices are heard, and torches glow,
 As marshalling the stranger's way,
 Straight for the room where Oswald
 lay;
 The cry was, — "Tidings from the
 host,
 Of weight—a messenger comes post."
 Stifling the tumult of his breast,
 His answer Oswald thus express'd—
 "Bring food and wine, and trim the
 fire;
 Admit the stranger, and retire."

VI.

The stranger came with heavy stride,
 The morion's plumes his visage hide,
 And the buff-coat, an ample fold,
 Mantles his form's gigantic mould.
 Full slender answer deigned he
 To Oswald's anxious courtesy,
 But mark'd, by a disdainful smile,
 He saw and scorn'd the petty wile,
 When Oswald changed the torch's
 place,
 Anxious that on the soldier's face
 Its partial lustre might be thrown,
 To show his looks, yet hide his own.
 His guest, the while, laid low aside

The ponderous cloak of tough bull's
 hide,
 And to the torch glanced broad and
 clear
 The corslet of a cuirassier;
 Then from his brows the casque he
 drew,
 And from the dank plume dash'd the
 dew,
 From gloves of mail relieved his
 hands,
 And spread them to the kindling
 brands,
 And, turning to the genial board,
 Without a health, or pledge, or word
 Of meet and social reverence said,
 Deeply he drank and fiercely fed;
 As free from ceremony's sway,
 As famish'd wolf that tears his prey.

VII.

With deep impatience, tinged with
 fear,
 His host beheld him gorge his cheer,
 And quaff the full carouse, that lent
 His brow a fiercer hardiment.
 Now Oswald stood a space aside,
 Now paced the room with hasty stride,
 In feverish agony to learn
 Tidings of deep and dread concern,
 Cursing each moment that his guest
 Protracted o'er his ruffian feast.
 Yet, viewing with alarm, at last,
 The end of that uncouth repast,
 Almost he seem'd their haste to rue,
 As, at his sign, his train withdrew,
 And left him with the stranger, free
 To question of his mystery.
 Then did his silence long proclaim
 A struggle between fear and shame.

VIII.

Much in the stranger's mein appears,
 To justify suspicious fears.
 On his dark face a scorching clime,
 And toil, had done the work of time,
 Roughen'd the brow, the temples
 bared,
 And sable hairs with silver shared,
 Yet left— what age alone could
 tame—
 The lip of pride, the eye of flame;

The full-drawn lip that upward curl'd,
The eye, that seem'd to scorn the
world.

That lip had terror never blench'd;
Ne'er in that eye had tear-drop
quench'd

The flash severe of swarthy glow,
That mock'd at pain, and knew not
woe.

Inured to danger's direst form,
Tornado and earthquake, flood and
storm,

Death had he seen by sudden blow,
By wasting plague, by tortures slow,
By mine or breach, by steel or ball,
Knew all his shapes, and scorn'd
them all.

IX.

But yet, though BERTRAM'S harden'd
look,
Unmoved, could blood and danger
brook,

Still worse than apathy had place
On his swart brow and callous face;
For evil passions, cherish'd long,
Had ploughed them with impressions
strong.

All that gives gloss to sin, all gay
Light folly, past with youth away,
But rooted stood, in manhood's hour,
The weeds of vice without their
flower.

And yet the soil in which they grew,
Had it been tamed when life was new,
Had depth and vigour to bring forth
The harder fruits of virtuous worth.
Not that, e'en then, his heart had
known

The gentler feelings' kindly tone;
But lavish waste had been refined
To bounty in his chasten'd mind,
And lust of gold, that waste to feed,
Been lost in love of glory's meed,
And, frantic then no more, his pride
Had ta'en fair virtue for its guide.

X.

Even now, by conscience unrestrain'd,
Clogg'd by gross vice, by slaughter
stain'd,

Still knew his daring soul to soar,
And mastery o'er the mind he bore;

For meaner guilt, or heart less hard,
Quail'd beneath Bertram's bold regard.
And this felt Oswald, while in vain
He strove, by many a winding train,
To lure his sullen guest to show,
Unask'd, the news he long'd to know,
While on far other subject hung
His heart, than falter'd from his
tongue.

Yet nought for that his guest did deign
To note or spare his secret pain,
But still, in stern and stubborn sort,
Return'd him answer dark and short,
Or started from the theme, to range
In loose digression wild and strange,
And forced the embarrass'd host to
buy,

By query close, direct reply.

XI.

A while he glozed upon the cause
Of Commons, Covenant, and Laws,
And Church Reform'd—but felt re-
buke

Beneath grim Bertram's sneering look,
Then stammer'd—"Has a field been
fought?"

Has Bertram news of battle brought?
For sure a soldier, famed so far
In foreign fields for feats of war,
On eve of fight ne'er left the host,
Until the field were won and lost."

"Here, in your towers by circling
Tees,

You, Oswald Wycliffe, rest at ease;
Why deem it strange that others come
To share such safe and easy home.
From fields where danger, death, and
toil,

Are the reward of civil broil?"—

"Nay, mock not, friend! since well
we know

The near advances of the foe,
To mar our northern army's work,
Encamp'd before beleaguer'd York;
Thy horse with valiant Fairfax lay,
And must have fought—how went the
day?"

XII.

"Wouldst hear the tale?—On Mars-
ton heath

Met, front to front, the ranks of death;

Flourish'd the trumpets fierce, and
 now
 Fired was each eye, and flush'd each
 brow;
 On either side loud clamours ring,
 'God and the Cause!'—'God and
 the King!'
 Right English all, they rush'd to
 blows,
 With nought to win, and all to lose.
 I could have laugh'd—but lack'd the
 time—
 To see, in phrenesy sublime,
 How the fierce zealots fought and
 bled,
 For king or state, as humour led.
 Some for a dream of public good,
 Some for church-tippet, gown and
 hood,
 Draining their veins, in death to
 claim
 A patriot's or a martyr's name.—
 Led Bertram Risingham the hearts,
 That counter'd there on adverse
 parts,
 No superstitious fool had I
 Sought El Dorados in the sky!
 Chili had heard me through her
 states,
 And Lima oped her silver gates,
 Rich Mexico I had march'd through,
 And sack'd the splendours of Peru,
 'Till sunk Pizarro's daring name,
 And, Cortez, thine, in Bertram's
 fame."—

"Still from the purpose wilt thou
 stray!
 Good gentle friend, how went the
 day?"—

XIII.

"Good am I deem'd at trumpet-
 sound,
 And good where goblets dance the
 round,
 Though gentle ne'er was join'd, till
 now,
 With rugged Bertram's breast and
 brow.—
 But I resume. The battle's rage
 Was like the strife which currents
 wage,

Where Orinoco, in his pride,
 Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
 But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
 A rival sea of roaring war;
 While, in ten thousand eddies driven,
 The billows fling their foam to heav-
 en,
 And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
 Where rolls the rivers, where the
 main.
 Even thus upon the bloody field,
 The eddying tides of conflict wheel'd
 Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
 Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
 Hurling against our spears a line
 Of gallants, fiery as their wine,
 Then ours, though stubborn in their
 zeal,
 In zeal's despite began to reel.
 What wouldst thou more?—in tumult
 tost,
 Our leaders fell, our ranks were
 lost.
 A thousand men, who drew the
 sword
 For both the Houses and the Word,
 Preach'd forth from hamlet, grange,
 and down,
 To curb the crosier and the crown,
 Now, stark and stiff, lie stretch'd in
 gore,
 And ne'er shall rail at mitre more.—
 Thus fared it, when I left the fight,
 With the good Cause and Commons'
 right."—

XIV.

"Disastrous news!" dark Wycliffe
 said;
 Assumed despondence bent his head,
 While troubled joy was in his eye,
 The well-feign'd sorrow to belie.—
 "Disastrous news!—when needed
 most,
 Told ye not that your chiefs were
 lost?
 Complete the woful tale and say,
 Who fell upon that fatal day;
 What leaders of repute and name
 Bought by their death a deathless
 fame.
 If such my direst foeman's doom,

My tear shall dew his honour'd
tomb.—

No answer?—Friend, of all our host,
Thou know'st whom I should hate the
most,

Whom thou, too, once wert wont to
hate,

Yet leavest me doubtful of his fate."
With look unmoved,—“Of friend or
foe,

Aught,” answer'd Bertram, “would'st
thou know

Demand in simple terms and plain,
A soldier's answer shalt thou gain ;—
For question dark, or riddle high,
I have nor judgment nor reply.”

XV.

The wrath his art and fear sup-
press'd,
Now blazed at once in Wycliff's
breast;

And brave, from man so meanly
born,

Roused his hereditary scorn.

“Wretch! hast thou paid thy bloody
debt?

PHILIP OF MORTHAM, lives he yet?

False to thy patron or thine oath,

Trait'rous or perjured, one or both.

Slave! hast thou kept thy promise
plight,

To slay thy leader in the fight?”—

Then from his feet the soldier
sprung,

And Wycliffe's hand he strongly
wrung;

His grasp, as hard as glove of mail,
Forced the red blood-drop from the
nail—

“A health!” he cried; and, ere he
quaff'd,

Flung from him Wycliffe's hand, and
laugh'd :

—“Now, Oswald Wycliffe, speaks
thy heart!

Now play'st thou well thy genuine
part!

Worthy, but for thy craven fear,

Like me to roam a bucanier.

What reck'st thou of the Cause divine,

If Mortham's wealth and lands be
thine?

What carest thou for beleagu'rd
York,

If this good hand have done its work?
Or what, though Fairfax and his best
Are reddening Marston's swarthy
breast,

If Philip Mortham with them lie,
Lending his life-blood to the dye?—

Sit, then! and as 'mid comrades free
Carousing after victory,

When tales are told of blood and fear,
That boys and women shrink to hear,

From point to point I frankly tell

The deed of death as it befell.

XVI.

“When purposed vengeance I forego,
Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe;

And when an insult I forgive,

Then brand me as a slave, and live!—

Philip of Mortham is with those

Whom Bertram Risingham calls foes;

Or whom more sure revenge attends,

If number'd with ungrateful friends.

As was his wont, ere battle glow'd,

Along the marshal'd ranks he rode,

And wore his vizor up the while.

I saw his melancholy smile,

When, full opposed in front, he knew

Where ROKEBY's kindred banner flew.

‘And thus,’ he said, ‘will friends di-
vide!’—

I heard, and thought how, side by
side,

We two had turn'd the battle's tide,

In many a well-debated field,

Where Bertram's breast was Philip's
shield.

I thought on Darien's deserts pale,

Where death bestrides the evening
gale,

How o'er my friend my cloak I threw,

And fenceless faced the deadly dew;

I thought on Quariana's cliff,

Where, rescued from our foundering
skiff,

Through the white breakers' wrath I
bore

Exhausted Mortham to the shore;

And when his side an arrow found,

I suck'd the Indian's venom'd wound,
 These thoughts like torrents rush'd
 along,
 To sweep away my purpose strong.

XVII.

“Hearts are not flint, and flints are
 rent;

Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent.
 When Mortham bade me, as of yore,
 Be near him in the battle's roar,
 I scarcely saw the spears laid low,
 I scarcely heard the trumpets blow;
 Lost was the war in inward strife,
 Debating Mortham's death or life.
 'Twas then I thought, how, lured to
 come,

As partner of his wealth and home,
 Years of piratic wandering o'er,
 With him I sought our native shore.
 But Mortham's lord grew far es-
 tranged
 From the bold heart with whom he
 ranged;

Doubts, horrors, superstitious fears
 Sadden'd and dimm'd descending
 years;

The wily priests their victim sought,
 And damn'd each free-born deed and
 thought.

Then must I seek another home,
 My license shook his sober dome;
 If gold he gave, in one wild day
 I revell'd thrice the sum away.
 An idle outcast then I stray'd,
 Unfit for tillage or for trade.

Deem'd, like the steel of rusted lance,
 Useless and dangerous at once.
 The women fear'd my hardy look,
 At my approach the peaceful shook;
 The merchant saw my glance of flame,
 And lock'd his hoards when Bertram
 came;

Each child of coward peace kept far
 From the neglected son of war.

XVIII.

“But civil discord gave the call,
 And made my trade the trade of all.
 By Mortham urged, I came again
 His vassals to the fight to train.
 What Guerdon waited on my care?

I could not cant of creed or prayer;
 Sour fanatics each trust obtain'd,
 And I, dishonour'd and disdain'd,
 Gain'd but the high and happy lot,
 In these poor arms to front the shot!
 All this thou know'st, thy gestures
 tell;

Yet hear it o'er, and mark it well.
 'Tis honour bids me now relate
 Each circumstance of Mortham's fate.

XIX.

“Thoughts, from the tongue that
 slowly part,
 Glance quick as lightning through
 the heart.

As my spur press'd my courser's
 side,

Philip of Mortham's cause was
 tried,

And, ere the charging squadrons
 mix'd,

His plea was cast, his doom was fix'd.
 I watch'd him through the doubtful
 fray,

That changed as March's moody day,
 Till, like a stream that bursts its
 bank,

Fierce Rupert thunder'd on our
 flank.

'Twas then, 'midst tumult, smoke,
 and strife,

Where each man fought for death or
 life,

'Twas then I fired my petronel,
 And Mortham, steed and rider, fell.

One dying look he upward cast,
 Of wrath and anguish—'twas his last.
 Think not that there I stopp'd to
 view

What of the battle should ensue;
 But ere I clear'd that bloody press,
 Our northern horse ran masterless;
 Monckton and Mitton told the news,
 How troops of roundheads choked
 the Ouse,

And many a bonny Scot, aghast,
 Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
 Cursing the day when zeal or meed
 First lured their Lesley o'er the
 Tweed.

Yet when I reach'd the banks of Swale,
Had rumour learn'd another tale ;
With his barb'd horse fresh tidings say,
Stout Cromwell has redeem'd the day :
But whether false the news, or true,
Oswald, I reckon as light as you."

XX.

Not then by Wycliffe might be shown,
How his pride startled at the tone
In which his complice, fierce and free,
Asserted guilt's equality.

In smoothest terms his speech he wove,

Of endless friendship, faith, and love ;
Promised and vow'd in courteous sort,
But Bertram broke professions short.

"Wycliffe, be sure not here I stay,
No, scarcely till the rising day ;
Warn'd by the legends of my youth,
I trust not an associate's truth.

Do not my native dales prolong
Of Percy Rede the tragic song,
Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
By Girsonfield, that treacherous Hall ?
Oft, by the Pringle's haunted side,
The shepherd sees his spectre glide.
And near the spot that gave me name,
The moated mound of Risingham,
Where Reed upon her margin sees
Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,

Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
An outlaw's image on the stone ;
Unmatch'd in strength, a giant he,
With quiver'd back, and kirtled knee.

Ask how he died, that hunter bold,
The tameless monarch of the wold,
And age and infancy can tell,
By brother's treachery he fell.
Thus warn'd by legends of my youth,
I trust to no associate's truth.

XXI.

"When last we reason'd of this deed,
Nought, I bethink me, was agreed,
Or by what rule, or when, or where,
The wealth of Mortham we should share ;

Then list, while I, the portion name,

Our differing laws give each to claim.
Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,

Her rules of heritage must own ;
They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
And these I yield :—do thou revere
The statutes of the Bucanier.

Friend to the sea, and foeman sworn
To all that on her waves are borne,
When falls a mate in battle broil,
His comrade heirs his portion'd spoil ;
When dies in fight a daring foe,
He claims his wealth who struck the blow ;

And either rule to me assigns
Those spoils of Indian seas and mines,

Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark ;
Ingot of gold and diamond spark,
Chalice and plate from churches borne,

And gems from shrieking beauty torn,

Each string of pearl, each silver bar,
And all the wealth of western war.

I go to search, where, dark and deep,
Those Trans-atlantic treasures sleep.
Thou must along—for, lacking thee,
The heir will scarce find entrance free ;

And then farewell. I haste to try
Each varied pleasure wealth can buy ;
When cloyed each wish, those wars afford

Fresh work for Bertram's restless sword."

XXII.

An undecided answer hung
On Oswald's hesitating tongue.
Despite his craft, he heard with awe
This ruffian stabber fix the law ;
While his own troubled passions veer
Through hatred, joy, regret, and fear ;—

Joy'd at the soul that Bertram flies,
He grudged the murderer's mighty prize,

Hated his pride's presumptuous tone,
And fear'd to wend with him alone.
At length, that middle course to steer,

To cowardice and craft so dear,
 "His charge," he said, "would ill
 allow

His absence from the fortress now;
 WILFRID on Bertram should attend,
 His son should journey with his
 friend."

XXIII.

-Contempt kept Bertram's anger down,
 And wreathed to savage smile his
 frown.

"Wilfrid, or thou—'tis one to me,
 Whichever bears the golden key.
 Yet think not but I mark, and smile
 To mark, thy poor and selfish wile!
 If injury from me you fear,
 What, Oswald Wycliffe, shields thee
 here?

I've sprung from walls more high
 than these,
 I've swam through deeper streams
 than Tees.

Might I not stab thee, ere one yell
 Could rouse the distant sentinel?
 Start not—it is not my design,
 But, if it were, weak fence were thine;
 And, trust me, that, in time of need,
 This hand hath done more desperate
 deed.

Go, haste and rouse thy slumbering
 son;
 Time calls, and I must needs be
 gone."

XXIV.

Nought of his sire's ungenerous part
 Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart;
 A heart too soft from early life
 To hold with fortune needful strife.
 His sire, while yet a hardier race
 Of numerous sons were Wycliffe's
 grace,

On Wilfrid set contemptuous brand,
 For feeble heart and forceless hand;
 But a fond mother's care and joy
 Were centred in her sickly boy.
 No touch of childhood's frolic mood
 Show'd the elastic spring of blood;
 Hour after hour he loved to pore
 On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,
 But turn'd from martial scenes and
 light

From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
 To ponder Jaques' moral strain,
 And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
 And weep himself to soft repose
 O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.

XXV.

In youth he sought not pleasures
 found

By youth in horse, and hawk, and
 hound,

But loved the quiet joys that wake
 By lonely stream and silent lake;
 In Deepdale's solitude to lie,
 Where all is cliff and copse and sky
 To climb Catcastle's dizzy peak,
 Or lone Pendragon's mound to seek.
 Such was his wont, and there his
 dream

Soar'd on some wild fantastic theme,
 Of faithful love, or ceaseless spring,
 Till Contemplation's wearied wing;
 The enthusiast could no more sus-
 tain,

And sad he sunk to earth again.

XXVI.

He loved—as many a lay can tell,
 Preserved in Stanmore's lonely dell;
 For his was minstrel's skill, he caught
 The art unteachable, untaught;
 He loved—his soul did nature frame
 For love, and fancy nursed the flame;
 Vainly he loved—for seldom swain
 Of such soft mould is loved again;
 Silent he loved—in every gaze
 Was passion, friendship in his phrase.
 So mused his life away—till died
 His brethren all, their father's pride.
 Wilfrid is now the only heir
 Of all his stratagems and care,
 And destined, darkling, to pursue
 Ambition's maze by Oswald's clue.

XXVII.

Wilfrid must love and woo the bright
 Matilda, heir of Rokeby's knight.
 To love her was an easy hest,
 The secret empress of his breast;
 To woo her was a harder task
 To one that durst not hope or ask.
 Yet all Matilda could, she gave
 In pity to her gentle slave;

Friendship, esteem, and fair regard,
And praise, the poet's best reward!
She read the tales his taste approved,
And sung the lays he framed or
loved;

Yet, loth to nurse the fatal flame
Of hopeless love in friendship's name,
In kind caprice she oft withdrew
The favouring glance to friendship
due,

Then grieved to see her victim's pain,
And gave the dangerous smiles again.

XXVIII.

So did the suit of Wilfrid stand,
When war's loud summons waked
the land.

Three banners, floating o'er the Tees,
The wo-forboding peasant sees;
In concert oft they braved of old
The bordering Scot's incursion bold;
Frowning defiance in their pride,
Their vassals now and lords divide.
From his fair hall on Greta banks,
The Knight of Rokeby led his ranks,
To aid the valiant northern Earls,
Who drew the sword for Royal
Charles.

Mortham, by marriage near allied, —
His sister had been Rokeby's bride,
Though long before the civil fray,
In peaceful grave the lady lay;—
Philip of Mortham raised his band,
And march'd at Fairfax's command;
While Wycliffe, bound by many a
train

Of kindred art with wily Vane,
Less prompt to brave the bloody field,
Made Barnard's battlements his
shield,
Secured them with his Lunedale
powers,
And for the Commons held the
towers.

XXIX.

The lovely heir of Rokeby's Knight
Waits in his halls the event of fight;
For England's war revered the claim
Of every unprotected name,
And spared, amid its fiercest rage,
Childhood and womanhood and age.
But Wilfrid, son to Rokeby's foe,

Must the dear privilege forego,
By Greta's side, in evening grey,
To steal upon Matilda's way,
Striving, with fond hypocrisy,
For careless step and vacant eye;
Calming each anxious look and
glance,

To give the meeting all to chance,
Or framing, as a fair excuse,
The book, the pencil, or the muse:
Something to give, to sing, to say,
Some modern tale, some ancient lay.
Then, while the long'd-for minutes
last,—

Ah! minutes quickly over-past!
Recording each expression free,
Of kind or careless courtesy,
Each friendly look, each softer tone,
As food for fancy when alone.
All this is o'er—but still unseen,
Wilfrid may lurk in Eastwood green,
To watch Matilda's wonted round,
While springs his heart at every
sound.

She comes!—'tis but a passing sight,
Yet serves to cheat his weary night;
She comes not—He will wait the
hour,

When her lamp lightens in the
tower;

'Tis something yet, if, as she past,
Her shade is o'er the lattice cast.
“What is my life, my hope?” he
said;

“Alas! a transitory shade.”

XXX.

Thus wore his life, though reason
strove

For mastery in vain with love,
Forcing upon his thoughts the sum
Of present woe and ills to come,
While still he turn'd impatient ear
From Truth's intrusive voice severe.
Gentle, indifferent, and subdued,
In all but this, unmoved he view'd
Each outward change of ill and good:
But Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
Was Fancy's spoil'd and wayward
child;

In her bright car she bade him ride,
With one fair form to grace his side,

Or, in some wild and lone retreat,
 Flung her high spells around his seat,
 Bathed in her dews his languid head,
 Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
 For him her opiates gave to flow,
 Which he who tastes can ne'er forego,
 And placed him in her circle, free
 From every stern reality,
 Till, to the Visionary, seem
 Her day-dreams truth, and truth a
 dream.

XXXI.

Woe to the youth whom fancy gains,
 Winning from Reason's hand thereins,
 Pity and woe! for such a mind
 Is soft, contemplative, and kind;
 And woe to those who train such
 youth,

And spare to press the rights of truth,
 The mind to strengthen and anneal,
 While on the stithy glows the steel!
 O teach him, while your lessons last,
 To judge the present by the past;
 Remind him of each wish pursued,
 How rich it glow'd with promised
 good;

Remind him of each wish enjoy'd,
 How soon his hopes possession cloy'd!

Tell him, we play unequal game,
 Whene'er we shoot by Fancy's aim;
 And, ere he strip him for her race,
 Show the conditions of the chase.

Two sisters by the goal are set,
 Cold Disappointment and Regret;
 One disenchant the winner's eyes,
 And strips of all its worth the prize.
 While one augments its gaudy show,
 More to enhance the loser's woe.

The victor sees his fairy gold,
 Transform'd, when won, to drossy
 mold,

But still the vanquish'd mourns his
 loss,

And rues, as gold, that glittering
 dross.

XXXII.

More wouldst thou know—yon tower
 survey,

Yon couch unpress'd since parting
 day,

Yon untrimm'd lamp, whose yellow
 gleam

Is mingling with the cold moonbeam,
 And yon thin form!—the hectic red
 On his pale cheek unequal spread;

The head reclined, the loosen'd hair,
 The limbs relax'd, the mournful air.

See, he looks up;—a woful smile

Lightens his wo-worn cheek a while,

'Tis fancy wakes some idle thought,
 To gild the ruin she has wrought;

For, like the bat of Indian brakes,
 Her pinions fan the wounds she

makes,

And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
 She drinks his life-blood from the

vein.

Now to the lattice turn his eyes,
 Vain hope! to see the sun arise.

The moon with clouds is still o'ercast,
 Still howls by fits the stormy blast;

Another hour must wear away,
 Ere the East kindle into day,

And hark! to waste that weary hour,
 He tries the minstrel's magic power.

XXXIII.

Song.

TO THE MOON.

Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
 Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky!

Hail, though the mists that o'er thee
 stream

Lend to thy brow their sullen dye!
 How should thy pure and peaceful
 eye

Untroubled view our scenes below,
 Or how a tearless beam supply

To light a world of war and woe!

Fair Queen! I will not blame thee
 now,

As once by Greta's fairy side
 Each little cloud that dimm'd thy
 brow

Did then an angel's beauty hide.

And of the shades I then could chide,
 Still are the thoughts to memory

dear,

For, while a softer strain I tried,

They hid my blush, and calm'd my
 fear.

Then did I swear thy ray serene
 Was form'd to light some lonely dell,
 By two fond lovers only seen,
 Reflected from the crystal well,
 Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
 Or quivering on the lattice bright,
 Or glancing on their couch, to tell
 How swiftly wanes the summer
 night!

XXXIV.

He starts—a step at this lone hour!
 A voice!—his father seeks the tower,
 With haggard look and troubled
 sense,
 Fresh from his dreadful conference.
 “Wilfrid!—what, not to sleep ad-
 dress'd?
 Thou hast no cares to chase thy rest.
 Mortham has fall'n on Marston-moor;
 Bertram brings warrant to secure
 His treasures, bought by spoil and
 blood,
 For the State's use and public good.
 The menials will thy voice obey;
 Let his commission have its way,
 In every point, in every word.”—
 Then, in a whisper, — “Take thy
 sword!
 Bertram is—what I must not tell.
 I hear his hasty step—farewell!”

CANTO SECOND.

I.

FAR in the chambers of the west,
 The gale has sigh'd itself to rest;
 The moon was cloudless now and
 clear,
 But pale, and soon to disappear.
 The thin grey clouds wax dimly light
 On Brusleton and Houghton height;
 And the rich dale, that eastward lay,
 Waited the wakening touch of day,
 To give its woods and cultured plain,
 And towers and spires, to light again.
 But, westward, Stanmore's shapeless
 swell,
 And Lunedale wild, and Kelton-fell,
 And rock-begirdled Gilmanscar,
 And Arkingarth, lay dark afar;

While, as a livelier twilight falls,
 Emerge proud Barnard's banner'd
 walls.
 High-crown'd he sits, in dawning
 pale,
 The sovereign of the lovely vale.

II.

What prospects, from his watch-tower
 high,
 Gleam gradual on the warder's eye!—
 Far sweeping to the east, he sees
 Down his deep woods the course of
 Tees,
 And tracks his wanderings by the
 steam
 Of summer vapours from the stream;
 And ere he paced his destined hour
 By Brackenbury's dungeon-tower,
 These silver mists shall melt away,
 And dew the woods with glittering
 spray.
 Then in broad lustre shall be shown
 That mighty trench of living stone,
 And caca hugo trunk that, from the
 side,
 Reclines him o'er the darksome tide,
 Where Tees, full many a fathom low,
 Wears with his rage no common foe;
 For pebbly bank, nor sand-bed here,
 Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce ca-
 reer,
 Condemn'd to mine a channell'd way,
 O'er solid sheets of marble grey.

III.

Nor Tees alone, in dawning bright,
 Shall rush upon the ravish'd sight;
 But many a tributary stream
 Each from its own dark dell shall
 gleam:
 Staindrop, who, from her silvan
 bowers,
 Salutes proud Raby's battled towers;
 The rural brook of Egliston,
 And Balder, named from Odin's son;
 And Greta, to whose banks ere long
 We lead the lovers of the song;
 And silver Lune, from Stanmore wild,
 And fairy Thorsgill's murmuring
 child,
 And last and least, but loveliest still,

Romantic Deepdale's slender rill.
 Who in that dim-wood glen hath
 stray'd,
 Yet long'd for Roslin's magic glade?
 Who, wandering there, hath sought
 to change
 Even for that vale so stern and strange,
 Where Cartland's Crags, fantastic
 rent,
 Through her green copse like spires
 are sent?
 Yet, Albin, yet the praise be thine,
 Thy scenes and story to combine!
 Thou bid'st him, who by Roslyn
 strays,
 List to the deeds of other days;
 'Mid Cartland's Crags thou show'st
 the cave,
 The refuge of thy champion brave;
 Giving each rock its storied tale,
 Pouring a lay from every dale,
 Knitting, as with a moral band,
 Thy native legends with thy land,
 To lend each scene the interest
 high
 Which genius beams from Beauty's
 eye.

IV.

Bertram awaited not the sight
 Which sun-rise shows from Barnard's
 height,
 But from the towers, preventing day,
 With Wilfrid took his early way,
 While misty dawn, and moonbeam
 pale,
 Still mingled in the silent dale.
 By Barnard's bridge of stately stone,
 The southern bank of Tees they
 won;
 Their winding path then eastward
 cast,
 And Egliston's grey ruins pass'd;
 Each on his own deep visions bent,
 Silent and sad they onward went.
 Well may you think that Bertram's
 mood,
 To Wilfrid savage seem'd and rude;
 Well may you think bold Risingham
 Held Wilfrid trivial, poor, and tame;
 And small the intercourse, I ween,
 Such uncongenial souls between.

V.

Stern Bertram shunn'd the nearer
 way,
 Through Rokeby's park and chase
 that lay,
 And, skirting high the valley's ridge,
 They cross'd by Greta's ancient
 bridge,
 Descending where her waters wind
 Free for a space and unconfined,
 As, 'scaped from Brignall's dark-
 wood glen,
 She seeks wild Mortham's deeper den.
 There, as his eye glanced o'er the
 mound,
 Raised by that Legion long renown'd,
 Whose votive shrine asserts their
 claim,
 Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,
 "Stern sons of war!" sad Wilfrid
 sigh'd,
 "Behold the boast of Roman pride!
 What now of all your toils are known?
 A grassy trench, a broken stone!"—
 This to himself; for moral strain
 To Bertram were address'd in vain.

VI.

Of different mood, a deeper sigh
 Awake, when Rokeby's turrets high
 Were northward in the dawning seen
 To rear them o'er the thicket green.
 O then, though Spenser's self had
 stray'd
 Beside him through the lovely glade,
 Lending the rich luxuriant glow
 Of fancy, all its charms to show,
 Pointing the stream rejoicing free,
 As captive set at liberty,
 Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,
 And clamouring joyful on her road;
 Pointing where, up the sunny banks,
 The trees retire in scatter'd ranks,
 Save where, advanced before the rest,
 On knoll or hillock rears his crest,
 Lonely and huge, the giant Oak,
 As champions, when their band is
 broke,
 Stand forth to guard the rearward
 post,
 The bulwark of the scatter'd host—
 All this, and more, might Spenser say,

Yet waste in vain his magic lay,
While Wilfrid eyed the distant tower,
Whose lattice lights Matilda's bower.

VII.

The open vale is soon passed o'er,
Rokeby, though nigh, is seen no more;
Sinking 'mid Greta's thickets deep,
A wild and darker course they keep,
A stern and lone, yet lovely road,
As e'er the foot of Minstrel trode!
Broad shadows o'er their passage fell,
Deeper and narrower grew the dell;
It seem'd some mountain, rent and
riven,

A channel for the stream had given,
So high the cliffs of limestone grey
Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
Yielding, along their rugged base,
A flinty footpath's niggard space,
Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and
wave,

May hear the headlong torrent rave,
And like a steed in frantic fit,
That flings the froth from curb and
bit,

May view her chafe her waves to
spray,

O'er every rock that bars her way,
Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,
Thick as the schemes of human pride
That down life's current drive amain,
As frail, as frothy, and as vain!

VIII.

The cliffs that rear their haughty
head

High o'er the river's darksome bed,
Were now all naked, wild, and grey,
Now waving all with greenwood spray;
Here trees to every crevice clung,
And o'er the dell their branches
hung;

And there, all splinter'd and uneven,
The shiver'd rocks ascend to heaven;
Oft, too, the ivy swath'd their breast,
And wreathed its garland round their
crest,

Or from the spires bade loosely flare
Its tendrils in the middle air.

As pennons wont to wave of old
O'er the high feast of Baron bold,

When revell'd loud the feudal rout,
And the arch'd halls return'd their
shout;

Such and more wild is Greta's roar,
And such the echoes from her shore.
And so the ivied banners' gleam,
Waved wildly o'er the brawling
stream.

IX.

Now from the stream the rocks re-
cede,

But leave between no sunny mead,
No, nor the spot of pebbly sand,
Oft found by such a mountain strand;
Forming such warm and dry retreat,
As fancy deems the lonely seat,
Where hermit wandering from his
cell,

His rosary might love to tell.
But here, 'twixt rock and river, grew
A dismal grove of sable yew,
With whose sad tints were mingled
seen

The blighted fir's sepulchral green.
Seem'd that the trees their shadows
cast,

The earth that nourish'd them to
blast;

For never knew that swarthy grove
The verdant hue that fairies love;
Nor wilding green, nor woodland
flower,

Arose within its baleful bower:
The dank and sable earth receives
Its only carpet from the leaves,
That, from the withering branches
cast,

Bestrew'd the ground with every
blast.

Though now the sun was o'er the
hill,

In this dark spot 'twas twilight still,
Save that on Greta's farther side
Some straggling beams through
copsewood glide;

And wild and savage contrast made
That dingle's deep and funeral shade,
With the bright tints of early day,
Which, glimmering through the ivy
spray,

On the opposing summit lay.

X.

The lated peasant shunn'd the dell;
 For Superstition wont to tell
 Of many a grisly sound and sight,
 Scaring its path at dead of night.
 When Christmas logs blaze high and
 wide,
 Such wonders speed the festal tide;
 While Curiosity and Fear,
 Pleasure and Pain, sit crouching
 near,
 Till childhood's cheek no longer
 glows,
 And village maidens lose the rose.
 The thrilling interest rises higher,
 The circle closes nigh and nigher,
 And shuddering glance is cast be-
 hind,
 As louder moans the wintry wind.
 Believe, that fitting scene was laid
 For such wild tales in Mortham
 glade;
 For who had seen, on Greta's side,
 By that dim light fierce Bertram
 stride,
 In such a spot, at such an hour,—
 If touch'd by Superstition's power,
 Might well have deem'd that Hell had
 given
 A murderer's ghost to upper Heaven,
 While Wilfrid's form had seem'd to
 glide
 Like his pale victim by his side.

XI.

Nor think to village swains alone
 Are these unearthly terrors known;
 For not to rank nor sex confined
 Is this vain ague of the mind:
 Hearts firm as steel, as marble hard,
 'Gainst faith, and love, and pity barr'd,
 Have quaked, like aspen leaves in
 May,
 Beneath its universal sway.
 Bertram had listed many a tale
 Of wonder in his native dale,
 That in his secret soul retain'd
 The credence they in childhood
 gain'd:
 Nor less his wild adventurous youth
 Believed in every legend's truth;

Learn'd when, beneath the tropic
 gale,
 Full swell'd the vessel's steady sail,
 And the broad Indian moon her
 light
 Pour'd on the watch of middle night,
 When seamen love to hear and tell
 Of portent, prodigy, and spell:
 What gales are sold on Lapland's
 shore,
 How whistle rash bids tempests roar,
 Of witch, of mermaid, and of sprite,
 Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light;
 Or of that Phantom Ship, whose form
 Shoots like a meteor through the
 storm;
 When the dark scud comes driving
 hard,
 And lower'd is every topsail yard,
 And canvas, wove in earthly looms,
 No more to brave the storm presumes!
 Then, 'mid the war of sea and sky,
 Top and top-gallant hoisted high,
 Full spread and crowded every sail,
 The Demon Frigate braves the gale;
 And well the doom'd spectators know
 The harbinger of wreck and woe.

XII.

Then, too, were told, in stifled tone,
 Marvels and omens all their own;
 How, by some desert isle or key,
 Where Spaniards wrought their
 cruelty,
 Or where the savage pirates mood
 Repaid it home in deeds of blood,
 Strange nightly sounds of woe and
 fear
 Appall'd the listening Bucanier,
 Whose light-arm'd shallop anchor'd
 lay
 In ambush by the lonely bay.
 The groan of grief, the shriek of
 pain
 Ring from the moonlight groves of
 cane;
 The fierce adventurer's heart they
 scare,
 Who wearies memory for a prayer,
 Curses the roadstead, and with gale
 Of early morning lifts the sail,

To give, in thirst of blood and prey,
A legend for another bay.

XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child,
Train'd in the mystic and the wild,
With this on Bertram's soul at times
Rush'd a dark feeling of his crimes ;
Such to his troubled soul their form,
As the pale Death-ship to the storm,
And such their omen dim and dread,
As shrieks and voices of the dead,—
That pang, whose transitory force
Hover'd 'twixt horror and remorse ;
That pang, perchance, his bosom
press'd,

As Wilfrid sudden he address'd :—
“ Wilfrid, this glen is never trode
Until the sun rides high abroad ;
Yct twice have I beheld to-day
A Form that seem'd to dog our way ;
Twice from my glance it seem'd to
flee,

And shroud itself by cliff or tree.
How think'st thou?—Is our path way-
laid?

Or hath thy sire my trust betray'd?
If so'—Ere, starting from his
dream,

That turned upon a gentler theme,
Wilfred had roused him to reply,
Bertram sprung forward, shouting
high,

“ Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt
stand !”

And forth he darted, sword in hand.

XIV.

As bursts the levin in his wrath,
He shot him down the sounding path ;
Rock, wood, and stream, rang wildly
out,

To his loud step and savage shout.
Seems that the object of his race
Hath scaled the cliffs; his frantic
chase

Sidelong he turns, and now 'tis bent
Right up the rock's tall battlement ;
Straining each sinew to ascend,
Foot, hand, and knee, their aid must
lend.

Wilfrid, all dizzy with dismay,

Views from beneath, his dreadful way:
Now to the oak's warp'd roots he
clings,

Now trusts his weight to ivy strings;
Now, like the wild-goat, must he dare
An unsupported leap in air;
Hid in the shrubby rain-course now,
You mark him by the crashing bough.
And by his corslet's sudden clank,
And by the stones spurn'd from the
bank,

And by the hawk scared from her nest,
And ravens croaking o'er their guest,
Who deem his forfeit limbs shall pay
The tribute of his bold essay.

XV.

See! he emerges!—desperate now
All farther course—Yon beetling
brow,

In craggy nakedness sublime,
What heart or foot shall dare to climb?
It bears no tendril for his clasp,
Presents no angle to his grasp:

Sole stay his foot may rest upon,
Is yon earth-bedded jetting stone.
Balanced on such precarious prop,
He strains his grasp to reach the top.
Just as the dangerous stretch he
makes,

By heaven, his faithless footstool
shakes!

Beneath his tottering bulk it bends,
It sways, . . . it loosens, . . . it de-
scends!

And downward holds its headlong
way,

Crashing o'er rock and copsewood
spray.

Loud thunders shake the echoing
dell!—

Fell it alone?—alone it fell.

Just on the very verge of fate,
The hardy Bertram's falling weight
He trusted to his sinewy hands,
And on the top unbarm'd he stands!—

XVI.

Wilfrid a safer path pursued;
At intervals where, roughly hew'd,
Rude steps ascending from the dell
Render'd the cliffs accessible.

By circuit slow he thus attain'd
 The height that Risingham had gain'd,
 And when he issued from the wood,
 Before the gate of Mortham stood.
 'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay
 On battled tower and portal gray;
 And from the grassy slope he sees
 The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
 Where, issuing from her darksome
 bed,
 She caught the morning's eastern red,
 And through the softening vale below
 Roll'd her bright waves, in rosy glow,
 All blushing to her bridal bed,
 Like some shy maid in convent bred;
 While linnets, lark, and blackbird gay,
 Sing forth her nuptial roundelay.

XVII.

'Twas sweetly sung that roundelay;
 That summer morn shone blithe and
 gay;
 But morning beam, and wild-bird's
 call,
 Awaked not Mortham's silent hall.
 No porter, by the low-brow'd gate,
 Took in the wonted niche his seat;
 To the paved court no peasant drew;
 Waked to their toil no menial crew;
 The maiden's carol was not heard,
 As to her morning task she fared:
 In the void offices around,
 Rung not a hoof, nor bay'd a hound;
 Nor eager steed, with shrilling neigh,
 Accused the lagging groom's delay;
 Untrimm'd, undress'd, neglected now,
 Was alley'd walk and orchard bough;
 All spoke the master's absent care,
 All spoke neglect and disrepair.
 South of the gate, an arrow flight,
 Two mighty elms their limbs unite,
 As if a canopy to spread
 O'er the lone dwelling of the dead;
 For their huge boughs in arches
 bent
 Above a massive monument,
 Carved o'er in ancient Gothic wise,
 With many a scutcheon and device;
 There, spent with toil and sunk in
 gloom,
 Bertram stood pondering by the tomb.

XVIII.

"It vanish'd, like a flitting ghost!
 Behind this tomb," he said, "'twas
 lost—
 This tomb, where oft I deem'd lies
 stored
 Of Mortham's Indian wealth the
 hoard.
 'Tis true, the aged servants said
 Here his lamented wife is laid;
 But weightier reasons may be guess'd
 For their lord's strict and stern be-
 hest,
 That none should on his steps in-
 trude,
 Whene'er he sought this solitude.—
 An ancient mariner I knew,
 What time I sail'd with Morgan's crew,
 Who oft, 'mid our carousals, spake
 Of Raleigh, Frobisher, and Drake;
 Adventurous hearts! who barter'd,
 bold,
 Their English steel for Spanish gold.
 Trust not, would his experience say,
 Captain or comrade with your prey;
 But seek some charnel, when, at full,
 The moon gilds skeleton and skull;
 There dig, and tomb your precious
 heap;
 And bid the dead your treasure keep;
 Sure stewards they, if fitting spell
 Their service to the task compel.
 Lacks there such charnel?—kill a
 slave,
 Or prisoner, on the treasure-grave;
 And bid his discontented ghost
 Stalk nightly on his lonely post.—
 Such was his tale. Its truth, I ween,
 Is in my morning vision seen."

XIX.

Wilfrid, who scorn'd the legend wild,
 In mingled mirth and pity smiled,
 Much marvelling that a breast so bold
 In such fond tale belief should hold;
 But yet of Bertram sought to know
 The apparition's form and show.—
 The power within the guilty breast,
 Oft vanquish'd, never quite sup-
 press'd,
 That unsubdued and lurking lies
 To take the felon by surprise,

And force him, as by magic spell,
In his despite his guilt to tell,—
That power in Bertram's breast awoke;
Scarce conscious he was heard, he
spoke;

"'Twas Mortham's form, from foot to
head!

His morion, with the plume of red,
His shape, his mien—'twas Mortham,
right

As when I slew him in the fight."—
"Thou slay him?—thou?"—With con-
scious start

He heard, then mann'd his haughty
heart—

"I slew him?—I!—I had forgot
Thou, stripling, knew'st not of the
plot.

But it is spoken—nor will I
Deed done, or spoken word, deny.
I slew him: I! for thankless pride;
'Twas by this hand that Mortham
died.

XX.

Wilfrid, of gentle hand and heart,
Averse to every active part,
But most averse to martial broil,
From danger shrunk, and turn'd
from toil,

Yet the meek lover of the lyre
Nursed one brave spark of noble fire,
Against injustice, fraud, or wrong,
His blood beat high, his hand wax'd
strong.

Not his the nerves that could sustain
Unshaken, danger, toil, and pain;
But, when that spark blazed forth to
flame,

He rose superior to his frame.
And now it came, that generous
mood:

And, in full current of his blood,
On Bertram he laid desperate hand,
Placed firm his foot, and drew his
brand.

"Should every fiend, to whom thou'rt
sold,

Rise in thine aid, I keep my hold.—
Arouse there, ho! take spear and
sword!

Attack the murderer of your Lord!"

XXI.

A moment, fix'd as by a spell,
Stood Bertram—It seem'd miracle,
That one so feeble, soft, and tame
Set grasp on warlike Risingham.
But when he felt a feeble stroke,
The fiend within the ruffian woke!
To wrench the sword from Wilfrid's
hand,

To dash him headlong on the sand,
Was but one moment's work,—one
more

Had drench'd the blade in Wilfrid's
gore;

But, in the instant it arose,
To end his life, his love, his woes,
A warlike form, that mark'd the scene,
Presents his rapier sheathed between,
Parries the fast-descending blow,
And steps 'twixt Wilfrid and his foe;
Nor then unscabbarded his brand,
But, sternly pointing with his hand,
With monarch's voice forbade the
fight,

And motion'd Bertram from his sight.
"Go, and repent," he said, "while
time
Is given thee; add not crime to
crime."

XXII.

Mute, and uncertain, and amazed,
As on a vision Bertram gazed!
'Twas Mortham's bearing, bold and
high,

His sinewy frame, his falcon eye,
His look and accent of command,
The martial gesture of his hand,
His stately form, spare-built and tall,
His war-bleach'd locks—'twas Mor-
tham all.

Through Bertram's dizzy brain career
A thousand thoughts, and all of fear;
His wavering faith received not quite
The form he saw as Mortham's sprite,
But more he fear'd it, if it stood
His lord, in living flesh and blood.—
What spectre can the charnel send,
So dreadful as an injured friend?
Then, too, the habit of command,
Used by the leader of the band,
When Risingham, for many a day,

Had march'd and fought beneath his
 sway,
 Tamed him—and, with reverted face,
 Backwards he bore his sullen pace;
 Oft stopp'd, and oft on Mortham
 stared,
 And dark as rated mastiff glared;
 But when the tramp of steeds was
 heard,
 Plunged in the glen, and disap-
 pear'd;—
 Nor longer there the warrior stood,
 Retiring eastward through the wood;
 But first to Wilfrid warning gives,
 "Tell thou to none that Mortham
 lives."

XXIII.

Still rung these words in Wilfrid's
 ear,
 Hinting he knew not what of fear;
 When nearer came the coursers' tread,
 And, with his father at their head,
 Of horsemen arm'd a gallant power
 Rein'd up their steeds before the
 tower.
 "Whence these pale looks, my son?"
 he said:
 "Where's Bertram?—Why that naked
 blade?"
 Wilfrid ambiguously replied,
 (For Mortham's charge his honour
 tied,)
 "Bertram is gone—the villain's word
 Avouch'd him murderer of his lord!
 Even now we fought—but, when your
 tread
 Announced you nigh, the felon fled."
 In Wycliffe's conscious eye appear
 A guilty hope, a guilty fear;
 On his pale brow the dewdrop broke,
 And his lip quiver'd as he spoke:—

XXIV.

"A murderer!—Philip Mortham died
 Amid the battle's wildest tide.
 Wilfrid, or Bertram raves, or you!
 Yet, grant such strange confession
 true,
 Pursuit were vain—let him fly afar—
 Justice must sleep in civil war."
 A gallant Youth rode near his side,
 Brave Rokeby's page, in battle tried;

That morn, an embassy of weight
 He brought to Barnard's castle gate,
 And follow'd now in Wycliffe's train,
 An answer for his lord to gain.
 His sword, whose arch'd and sable neck
 An hundred wreaths of foam bedeck,
 Chafed not against the curb more high
 Than he at Oswald's cold reply;
 He bit his lip, implored his saint,
 (His the old faith)—then burst re-
 straint.

XXV.

"Yes! I beheld his bloody fall
 By that base traitor's dastard ball,
 Just when I thought to measure
 sword,
 Presumptuous hope! with Mortham's
 lord.
 And shall the murderer's scape who
 slew
 His leader, generous, brave, and true?
 Escape, while on the dew you trace
 The marks of his gigantic pace?
 No! ere the sun that dew shall dry,
 False Risingham shall yield or die.—
 Ring out the castle 'larum bell!
 Arouse the peasants with the knell!
 Meantime disperse—ride, gallants,
 ride!
 Beset the wood on every side.
 But if among you one there be,
 That honours Mortham's memory,
 Let him dismount and follow me!
 Else on your crests sit fear and shame,
 And foul suspicion dog your name!"

XXVI.

Instant to earth young REDMOND
 sprung;
 Instant on earth the harness rung
 Of twenty men of Wycliffe's band,
 Who waited not their lord's com-
 mand.
 Redmond his spurs from buskins
 drew,
 His mantle from his shoulders threw,
 His pistols in his belt he placed,
 The green-wood gain'd, the footsteps
 traced,
 Shouted like huntsman to his hounds.
 "To cover, hark!"—and in he bounds.

Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry,
 "Suspicion! yes—pursue him, fly—
 But venture not, in useless strife,
 On ruffian desperate of his life,
 Whoever finds him, shoot him dead!
 Five hundred nobles for his head!"

XXVII.

The horsemen gallop'd, to make good
 Each path that issued from the wood.
 Loud from the thickets rung the
 shout

Of Redmond and his eager rout;
 With them was Wilfrid, stung with
 ire,

And envying Redmond's martial fire,
 And emulous of fame.—But where
 Is Oswald, noble Mortham's heir?

He, bound by honour, law, and faith,
 Avenger of his kinsman's death?—
 Leaning against the elmin tree,
 With drooping head and slacken'd

knee,
 And clenched teeth, and close-clasp'd
 hands,

In agony of soul he stands!
 His downcast eye on earth is bent,
 His soul to every sound is lent;
 For in each shout that cleaves the air,
 May ring discovery and despair.

XXVIII.

What 'vail'd it him, that brightly
 play'd

The morning sun on Mortham's
 glade?

All seems in giddy round to ride,
 Like objects on a stormy tide,
 Seen eddying by the moonlight dim,
 Imperfectly to sink and swim.

What 'vail'd it, that the fair domain,
 Its battled mansion, hill, and plain,
 On which the sun so brightly shone,
 Envied so long, was now his own?
 The lowest dungeon, in that hour,
 Of Brackenbury's dismal tower,
 Had been his choice, could such a
 doom

Have open'd Mortham's bloody tomb!
 Forced, too, to turn unwilling ear
 To each surmise of hope or fear,

Murmur'd among the rustics round,
 Who gather'd at the 'larum sound;
 He dared not turn his head away,
 E'en to look up to heaven to pray,
 Or call on hell, in bitter mood,
 For one sharp death-shot from the
 wood!

XXIX.

At length, o'erpast that dreadful
 space,
 Back straggling came the scatter'd
 chase:

Jaded and weary, horse and man,
 Return'd the troopers one by one.
 Wilfrid, the last, arrived to say,
 All trace was lost of Bertram's way,
 Though Redmond still, up Brignall
 wood,

The hopeless quest in vain pursued.—
 O, fatal doom of human race!

What tyrant passions passions chase!
 Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone,
 Avarice and pride resume their
 throne;

The pang of instant terror by,
 They dictate thus their slave's re-
 ply:—

XXX.

"Ay—let him range like hasty
 hound!

And if the grim wolf's lair be found,
 Small is my care how goes the game
 With Redmond, or with Risingham.—
 Nay, answer not, thou simple boy!

Thy fair Matilda, all so coy
 To thee, is of another mood
 To that bold youth of Erin's blood.

Thy ditties will she freely praise,
 And pay thy pains with courtly
 phrase;

In a rough path will oft command—
 Accept at least—thy friendly hand;
 His she avoids, or, urged and pray'd,
 Unwilling takes his proffer'd aid,
 While conscious passion plainly
 speaks

In downcast look and blushing
 cheeks.

Whene'er he sings, will she glide
 nigh,

And all her soul is in her eye;

Yet doubts she still to tender free
The wonted words of courtesy.
These are strong signs!—yet where-
fore sigh,
And wipe, effeminate, thine eye?
Thine shall she be, if thou attend
The counsels of thy sire and friend.

XXXI.

“Scarce wert thou gone, when peep
of light
Brought genuine news of Marston’s
fight.
Brave Cromwell turn’d the doubtful
tide,
And conquest bless’d the rightful side;
Three thousand cavaliers lie dead,
Rupert and that bold Marquis fled;
Nobles and knights, so proud of late,
Must fine for freedom and estate.
Of these, committed to my charge,
Is Rokeby, prisoner at large;
Redmond, his page, arrived to say
He reaches Barnard’s towers to-day.
Right heavy shall his ransom be,
Unless that maid compound with
thee!
Go to her now—be bold of cheer,
While her soul floats ’twixt hope and
fear;
It is the very change of tide,
When best the female heart is tried—
Pride, prejudice, and modesty,
Are in the current swept to sea;
And the bold swain, who plies his oar,
May lightly row his bark to shore.”

CANTO THIRD.

I.

THE hunting tribes of air and earth
Respect the brethren of their birth;
Nature, who loves the claim of kind,
Less cruel chase to each assign’d.
The falcon, poised on soaring wing,
Watches the wild-duck by the spring;
The slow-hound wakes the fox’s lair;
The greyhound presses on the hare;
The eagle pounces on the lamb;
The wolf devours the fleecy dam:
Even tiger fell, and sullen bear,

Their likeness and their lineage spare,
Man, only, mars kind Nature’s plan,
And turns the fierce pursuit on man;
Plying war’s desultory trade,
Incursion, flight, and ambushade,
Since Nimrod, Cush’s mighty son,
At first the bloody game begun.

II.

The Indian, prowling for his prey,
Who hears the settlers track his way,
And knows in distant forests far
Camp his red brethren of the war;
He, when each double and disguise
To baffle the pursuit he tries,
Low crouching now his head to hide,
Where swampy streams through rush-
es glide,
Now covering with the wither’d leaves
The foot-prints that the dew receives:
He, skill’d in every silvan guile,
Knows not, nor tries, such various
wile,
As Risingham, when on the wind
Arose the loud pursuit behind.
In Redesdale his youth had heard
Each art her wily dalesmen dared,
When Rooken-edge, and Redswair
high,
To bugle rung and blood-hound’s cry,
Announcing Jedwood-axe and spear,
And Lid’sdale riders in the rear;
And well his venturous life had
proved,
The lessons that his childhood loved.

III.

Oft had he shown, in climes afar,
Each attribute of roving war;
The sharpen’d ear, the piercing eye,
The quick resolve in danger nigh;
The speed, that in the flight or chase,
Outstripp’d the Charib’s rapid race;
The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim;
The iron frame, inured to bear
Each dire inclemency of air,
Nor less confirm’d to undergo
Fatigue’s faint chill, and famine’s
throe.
These arts he proved, his life to save,
In peril oft by land and wave,

On Arawaca's desert shore,
Or where La Plata's billows roar,
When oft the sons of vengeful Spain
Track'd the marauder's steps in vain.
These arts, in Indian warfare tried,
Must save him now by Greta's side.

IV.

'Twas then, in hour of utmost need,
He proved his courage, art, and speed.

Now slow he stalk'd with stealthy pace,

Now started forth in rapid race,
Oft doubling back in mazy train,
To blind the trace the dews retain ;
Now clomb the rocks projecting high,
To baffle the pursuer's eye ;
Now sought the stream, whose brawling sound

The echo of his footsteps drown'd.
But if the forest verge he nears,
There trample steeds, and glimmer spears ;

If deeper down the copse he drew,
He heard the rangers' loud halloo,
Beating each cover while they came,
As if to start the silvan game.

'Twas then—like tiger close beset,
At every pass with toil and net,
'Counter'd, where'er he turns his glare,

By clashing arms and torches' flare,
Who meditates, with furious bound,
To burst on hunter, horse, and hound,
'Twas then that Bertram's soul arose,
Prompting to rush upon his foes:
But as that crouching tiger, cow'd
By brandish'd steel and shouting crowd,

Retreats beneath the jungle's shroud,
Bertram suspends his purpose stern,
And couches in the brake and fern,
Hiding his face, lest foemen spy,
The sparkle of his swarthy eye.

V.

Then Bertram might the bearing trace
Of the bold youth who led the chase ;
Who paused to list for every sound,
Climb every height to look around,
Then rushing on with naked sword,

Each dingle's bosky depths explored.
'Twas Redmond—by the azure eye ;
'Twas Redmond—by the locks that fly

Disorder'd from his glowing cheek ;
Mien, face, and form, young Redmond speak.

A form more active, light, and strong,
Ne'er shot the ranks of war along ;
The modest, yet the manly mien,
Might grace the court of maiden queen ;

A face more fair you well might find,
For Redmond's knew the sun and wind,

Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,

The charm of regularity ;
But every feature had the power
To aid the expression of the hour :
Whether gay wit, and humour sly,
Danced laughing in his light-blue eye ;

Or bended brow, and glance of fire,
And kindling cheek, spoke Erin's ire ;
Or soft and sadden'd glances show
Her ready sympathy with woe ;
Or in that wayward mood of mind,
When various feelings are combined,
When joy and sorrow mingle near,
And hope's bright wings are check'd
by fear,

And rising doubts keep transport down,

And anger lends a short-lived frown ;
In that strange mood which maids approve

Even when they dare not call it love ;
With every change his features play'd
As aspens show the light and shade.

VI.

Well Risingham young Redmond knew :

And much he marvell'd that the crew,

Roused to revenge bold Mortham dead,

Were by that Mortham's foeman led ;
For never felt his soul the woe,
That wails a generous foeman low,
Far less that sense of justice strong,

That wrecks a generous foeman's
wrong.

But small his leisure now to pause;
Redmond is first, whate'er the cause:
And twice that Redmond came so
near

Where Bertram couch'd like hunted
deer,

The very boughs his steps displace,
Rustled against the ruffian's face,
Who, desperate, twice prepared to
start,

And plunge his dagger in his heart!
But Redmond turn'd a different way,
And the bent boughs resumed their
sway,

And Bertram held it wise, unseen,
Deeper to plunge in coppice green.
Thus, circled in his coil, the snake,
When roving hunters beat the brake,
Watches with red and glistening eye,
Prepared, if heedless step draw nigh,
With forked tongue and venom'd fang
Instant to dart the deadly pang;
But if the intruders turn aside,
Away his coils unfolded glide,
And through the deep savannah wind,
Some undisturb'd retreat to find.

VII.

But Bertram, as he backward drew,
And heard the loud pursuit renew,
And Redmond's hollo on the wind,
Oft mutter'd in his savage mind—
"Redmond O'Neale! were thou and I
Alone this day's event to try,
With not a second hero to see,
But the grey cliff and oaken tree,—
That voice of thine, that shouts so
loud,
Should ne'er repeat its summons
proud!

No! nor e'er try its melting power
Again in maiden's summer bower."
Eluded, now behind him die,
Faint and more faint, each hostile
cry;

He stands in Scargill wood alone,
Nor hears he now a harsher tone
Than the hoarse cushat's plaintive
cry,
Or Greta's sound that murmurs by;

And on the dale, so lone and wild,
The summer sun in quiet smiled.

VIII.

He listen'd long with anxious heart,
Ear bent to hear, and foot to start,
And, while his stretch'd attention
glows,

Refused his weary frame repose.
'Twas silence all—he laid him down,
Where purple heath profusely strown,
And throatswort, with its azure bell,
And moss and thyme his cushion
swell.

There, spent with toil, he listless
eyed

The course of Greta's playful tide;
Beneath, her banks now eddying dun,
Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
As, dancing over rock and stone,
In yellow light her currents shone,
Matching in hue the favorite gem
Of Albin's mountain-diadem.

Then, tired to watch the current's
play,

He turn'd his weary eyes away,
To where the bank opposing show'd
Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy
wood.

One, prominent above the rest,
Rear'd to the sun its pale grey breast;
Around its broken summit grew
The hazel rude, and sable yew;
A thousand varied lichens dyed
Its waste and weather-beaten side,
And round its rugged basis lay,
By time or thunder rent away,
Fragments, that, from its frontlet
torn,

Were mantled now by verdant thorn.
Such was the scene's wild majesty,
That fill'd stern Bertram's gazing
eye.

IX.

In sullen mood he lay reclined,
Revolving, in his stormy mind,
The felon deed, the fruitless guilt,
His patron's blood by treason spilt;
A crime, it seem'd, so dire and dread,
That it had power to wake the dead.
Then, pondering on his life betray'd

By Oswald's art to Redmond's blade,
In treacherous purpose to withhold,
So seem'd it, Mortham's promised
gold,

A deep and full revenge he vow'd
On Redmond, forward, fierce, and
proud;

Revenge on Wilfrid—on his sire
Redoubled vengeance, swift and
dire!—

If, in such mood, (as legends say,
And well believed that simple day,)
The Enemy of man has power
'To profit by the evil hour,
Here stood a wretch, prepared to
change

His soul's redemption for revenge!
But though his vows, with such a fire
Of earnest and intense desire
For vengeance dark and fell, were
made,

As well might reach hell's lowest
shade,

No deeper clouds the grove em-
brown'd,

No nether thunders shook the
ground;—

The demon knew his vassal's heart,
And spared temptation's needless art.

X.

Oft, mingled with the direful theme,
Came Mortham's form—Was it a
dream?

Or had he seen, in vision true,
That very Mortham whom he slew?

Or had in living flesh appear'd
The only man on earth he fear'd?—

To try the mystic cause intent,
His eyes, that on the cliff were bent,
'Counter'd at once a dazzling glance,
Like sunbeam flash'd from sword
or lance.

At once he started as for fight,
But not a foeman was in sight;
He heard the cushat's murmur
hoarse,

He heard the river's sounding course;
The solitary woodlands lay,

As slumbering in the summer ray.

He gazed, like lion roused, around,
Then sunk again upon the ground,

'Twas but, he thought, some fitful
beam,

Glanced sudden from the sparkling
stream;

Then plunged him from his gloomy
train

Of ill-connected thoughts again,

Until a voice behind him cried,

“Bertram! well met on Greta side.”

XI.

Instant his sword was in his hand,

As instant sunk the ready brand;

Yet, dubious still, opposed he stood

To him that issued from the wood:

“Guy Denzil!—is it thou?” he said;

“Do we two meet in Scargill shade?—

Stand back a space!—thy purpose
show,

Whether thou comest as friend or
foe.

Report hath said, that Denzil's name
From Rokeby's band was razed with
shame.”—

“A shame I owe that hot O'Neale,
Who told his knight, in peevish zeal,

Of my marauding on the clowns

Of Calverley and Bradford downs.

I reck not. In a war to strive,

Where, save the leaders, none can
thrive,

Suits ill my mood; and better game

Awaits us both, if thou'rt the same

Unscrupulous, bold Risingham,
Who watched with me in midnight
dark,

To snatch a deer from Rokeby-park.

How think'st thou?—“Speak thy
purpose out;

I love not mystery or doubt.”—

XII.

“Then, list.—Not far their lurk a crew
Of trusty comrades, staunch and true,

Glean'd from both factions—Round-
heads, freed

From cant of sermon and of creed;
And Cavaliers, whose souls, like
mine,

Spurn at the bonds of discipline.

Wiser, we judge, by dale and wo!

A warfare of our own to hold,

Than breathe our last on battle-
down,
For cloak or surplice, mace or crown.
Our schemes are laid, our purpose
set,
A chief and leader lack we yet.—
Thou art a wanderer, it is said ;
For Mortham's death, thy steps way-
laid,
Thy head at price—so say our spies,
Who range the valley in disguise.
Join then with us :—though wild de-
bate
And wrangling rend our infant state,
Each to an equal loth to bow,
Will yield to chief renown'd as
thou.”—

XIII.

“Even now,” thought Bertram, pas-
sion-stirr'd,
“I call'd on hell, and hell has heard !
What lack I, vengeance to command,
But of staunch comrades such a band ?
This Denzil, vow'd to every evil,
Might read a lesson to the devil.
Well, be it so ! each knave and fool
Shall serve as my revenge's tool.”—
Aloud, “I take thy proffer, Guy,
But tell me where thy comrades
lie ?”
“Not far from hence,” Guy Denzil
said ;
“Descend, and cross the river's bed,
Where rises yonder cliff so grey.”—
“Do thou,” said Bertram, “lead the
way.”
Then mutter'd, “It is best make
sure ;
Guy Denzil's faith was never pure.”
He follow'd down the deep descent,
Then through the Greta's streams
they went ;
And, when they reach'd the farther
shore,
They found the lonely cliff before.

XIV.

With wonder Bertram heard within
The flinty rock a murmur'd din ;
But when Guy pull'd the wilding
spray,

And brambles, from its base away,
He saw, appearing to the air,
A little entrance, low and square,
Like opening cell of hermit lone,
Dark, winding through the living
stone.

Here enter'd Denzil, Bertram here ;
And loud and louder on their ear,
As from the bowels of the earth,
Resounded shouts of boisterous mirth.
Of old, the cavern straight and rude,
In slaty rock the peasant how'd ;
And Brignall's woods, and Scargill's,
wave,

E'en now, o'er many a sister cave,
Where, far within the darksome rift,
The wedge and lever ply their thrift.
But war had silenced rural trade,
And the deserted mine was made
The banquet-hall and fortress too,
Of Denzil and his desperate crew.—
There Guilt his anxious revel kept ;
There, on his sordid pallet, slept
Guilt-born Excess, the goblet drain'd
Still in his slumbering grasp retain'd ;
Regret was there, his eye still cast
With vain repining on the past ;
Among the feasters waited near
Sorrow, and unrepentant Fear,
And Blasphemy, to frenzy driven,
With his own crimes reproaching
heaven ;
While Bertram show'd, amid the crew,
The Master-Fiend that Milton drew.

XV.

Hark ! the loud revel wakes again,
To greet the leader of the train.
Behold the group by the pale lamp,
That struggles with the earthy damp.
By what strange features Vice hath
known,
To single out and mark her own !
Yet some there are, whose brows re-
tain
Less deeply stamp'd her brand and
stain.

See yon pale stripling ! when a boy,
A mother's pride, a father's joy !
Now, 'gainst the vault's rude walls
reclined,
An early image fills his mind :

The cottage, once his sire's, he sees,
 Embower'd upon the banks of Tees;
 He views sweet Winston's woodland
 scene,
 And shares the dance on Gainford-
 green.

A tear is springing—but the zest
 Of some wild tale, or brutal jest,
 Hath to loud laughter stirr'd the rest.
 On him they call, the aptest mate
 For jovial song and merry feat:
 Fast flies his dream—with dauntless
 air,

As one victorious o'er Despair,
 He bids the ruddy cup go round,
 Till sense and sorrow both are
 drown'd:

And soon, in merry wassail, he,
 The life of all their revelry,
 Peals his loud song!—The muse has
 found

Her blossoms on the wildest ground,
 'Mid noxious weeds at random
 strew'd,

Themselves all profitless and rude.—
 With desperate merriment he sung,
 The cavern to the chorus rung;
 Yet mingled with his reckless glee
 Remorse's bitter agony.

XVI.

Song.

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there,
 Would grace a summer queen.
 And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
 Beneath the turrets high,
 A Maiden on the castle wall
 Was singing merrily,—

CHORUS.

“O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
 Than reign our English queen.”—

“If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with
 me,
 To leave both tower and town,
 Thou first must guess what life lead
 we,

That dwell by dale and down?
 And if thou canst that riddle read,
 As read full well you may,
 Then to the greenwood shalt thou
 speed,
 As blithe as Queen of May.”—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are
 fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
 Than reign our English queen.

XVII.

“I read you, by your bugle-horn,
 And by your palfrey good,
 I read you for a ranger sworn,
 To keep the king's greenwood.”—
 “A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
 And 'tis at peep of light;
 His blast is heard at merry morn,
 And mine at dead of night.”—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are
 fair,
 And Greta woods are gay;
 I would I were with Edmund there,
 To reign his Queen of May!

“With burnish'd brand and muske-
 toon,
 So gallantly you come,
 I read you for a bold Dragoon,
 That lists the tuck of drum.”—
 “I list no more the tuck of drum,
 No more the trumpet hear;
 But when the beetle sounds his hum,
 My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS.

“And, O! though Brignall banks be
 fair,
 And Greta woods be gay,
 Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
 Would reign my Queen of May!

XVIII.

“Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
 A nameless death I'll die!
 The fiend, whose lantern lights the
 mead,
 Were better made than I!

And when I'm with my comrades met,
 Beneath the greenwood bough,
 What once we were we all forget,
 Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS.

"Yet Brignall banks are fresh and
 fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen."

When Edmund ceased his simple
 song,
 Was silence on the sullen throng,
 Till waked some ruder mate their glee
 With note of coarser minstrelsy.
 But, far apart, in dark divan,
 Denzil and Bertram many a plan,
 Of import foul and fierce, design'd,
 While still on Bertram's grasping
 mind
 The wealth of murder'd Mortham
 hung;
 Though half he fear'd his daring
 tongue,
 When it should give his wishes birth,
 Might raise a spectre from the earth!

XIX.

At length his wondrous tale he told:
 When, scornful, smiled his comrade
 bold;
 For, train'd in license of a court,
 Religion's self was Denzil's sport;
 Then judge in what contempt he held
 The visionary tales of eld!
 His awe for Bertram scarce repress'd
 The unbeliever's sneering jest.
 "'Twere hard," he said, "for sage or
 seer
 To spell the subject of your fear;
 Nor do I boast the art renown'd,
 Vision and omen to expound.
 Yet, faith if I must needs afford
 To spectre watching treasured hoard,
 As bandog keeps his master's roof,
 Bidding the plunderer stand aloof,
 This doubt remains — thy goblin
 gaunt
 Hath chosen ill his ghostly haunt;
 For why his guard on Mortham hold,
 When Rokeby castle hath the godd

Thy patron won on Indian soil,
 By stealth, by piracy, and spoil?"

XX.

At this he paused—for angry shame
 Lower'd on the brow of Risingham.
 He blush'd to think, that he should
 seem
 Asserter of an airy dream,
 And gave his wrath another theme.
 "Denzil," he says, "though lowly
 laid,
 Wrong not the memory of the dead;
 For, while he lived, at Mortham's look
 Thy very soul, Guy Denzil, shook!
 And when he tax'd thy breach of word
 To yon fair Rose of Allenford,
 I saw thee crouch like chasten'd hound,
 Whose back the huntsman's lash hath
 found.
 Nor dare to call his foreign wealth
 The spoil of piracy or stealth;
 He won it bravely with his brand,
 When Spain waged warfare with our
 land,
 Mark, too—I brook no idle jeer,
 Nor couple Bertram's name with fear;
 Mine is but half the demon's lot,
 For I believe, but tremble not.—
 Enough of this.—Say, why this hoard
 Thou deem'st at Rokeby castle stored;
 Or think'st that Mortham would be-
 stow
 His treasure with his faction's foe?"

XXI.

Soon quench'd was Denzil's ill-timed
 mirth;
 Rather he would have seen the earth
 Give to ten thousand spectres birth,
 Than venture to awake to flame
 The deadly wrath of Risingham.
 Submiss he answer'd,—“Mortham's
 mind,
 Thou know'st, to joy was ill inclined.
 In youth, 'tis said, a gallant free,
 A lusty reveller was he;
 But since return'd from over sea,
 A sullen and a silent mood
 Hath numb'd the current of his blood.
 Hence he refused each kindly call
 To Rokeby's hospitable hall,

And our stout knight, at dawn of
morn
Who loved to hear the bugle-horn,
Nor less, when eve his oaks em-
brown'd,
To see the ruddy cup go round,
Took umbrage that a friend so near
Refused to share his chase and cheer;
Thus did the kindred barons jar,
Ere they divided in the war.
Yet, trust me, friend, Matilda fair
Of Mortham's wealth is destined heir.

XXII.

"Destined to her! to yon slight maid!
The prize my life had wellnigh paid,
When 'gainst Laroche, by Cayo's
wave,
I fought, my patron's wealth to save!
Denzil, I knew him long, yet ne'er
Knew him that joyous cavalier,
Whom youthful friends and early
fame
Call'd soul of gallantry and game.
A moody man, he sought our crew,
Desperate and dark, whom no one
knew;
And rose, as men with us must rise,
By scorning life and all its ties.
On each adventure rash he roved,
As danger for itself he loved;
On his sad brow nor mirth nor wine
Could e'er one wrinkled knot untwine;
Ill was the omen if he smiled,
For 'twas in peril stern and wild;
But when he laugh'd, each luckless
mate
Might hold our fortune desperate.
Foremost he fought in every broil,
Then scornful turned him from the
spoil;
Nay, often strove to bar the way
Between his comrades and their prey;
Preaching, even then, to such as we,
Hot with our dear-bought victory,
Of mercy and humanity.

XXIII.

"I loved him well—His fearless part,
His gallant leading, won my heart.
And after each victorious fight,

'Twas I that wrangled for his right,
Redeem'd his portion of the prey
That greedier mates had torn away:
In field and storm thrice saved his
life,
And once amid our comrades' strife.—
Yes, I have loved thee! Well hath
proved
My toil, my danger, how I loved!
Yet will I mourn no more thy fate,
Ingrate in life, in death ingrate.
Rise if thou canst!" he look'd around,
And sternly stamp'd upon the
ground—
"Rise, with thy bearing proud and
high,
Even as this morn it met mine eye,
And give me, if thou darest, the lie!"
He paused—then, calm and passion-
freed,
Bade Denzil with his tale proceed.

XXIV.

"Bertram, to thee I need not tell,
What thou hast caused to wot so well,
How Superstition's nets were twined
Around the Lord of Mortham's mind!
But since he drove thee from his
tower,
A maid he found in Greta's bower,
Whose speech, like David's harp, had
sway,
To charm his evil fiend away.
I know not if her features moved
Remembrance of the wife he loved;
But he would gaze upon her eye,
Till his mood soften'd to a sigh.
He, whom no living mortal sought
To question of his secret thought,
Now every thought and care con-
fess'd
To his fair niece's faithful breast;
Nor was there aught of rich and rare,
In earth, in ocean, or in air,
But it must deck Matilda's hair.
Her love still bound him unto life;
But then awoke the civil strife,
And menial bore, by his commands,
Three coffers, with their iron bands,
From Mortham's vault, at midnight
deep,
To her lone bower in Rokeby-Keep,

Ponderous with gold and plate of
pride,
His gift, if he in battle died."—

XXV.

"Then, Denzil, as I guess, lays train,
These iron-banded chests to gain;
Else, wherefore should he hover
here,

Where many a peril waits him near,
For all his feats of war and peace,
For plunder'd boors, and harts of
grease?

Since through the hamlets as he
fared,

What hearth has Guy's marauding
spared,

Or where the chase that hath not
rung

With Denzil's bow, at midnight
strung?"—

"I hold my wont—my rangers go,
Even now to track a milk-white doe.

By Rokeby-hall she takes her lair,
In Greta wood she harbours fair,

And when my huntsman marks her
way,

What think'st thou, Bertram, of the
prey?

Were Rokeby's daughter in our pow-
er,

We rate her ransom at her dower."

XXVI.

"'Tis well!—there's vengeance in the
thought,

Matilda is by Wilfrid sought;
And hot-brain'd Redmond, too, 'tis

said,
Pays lover's homage to the maid.

Bertram she scorn'd—If met by
chance,

She turn'd from me her shuddering
glance,

Like a nice dame, that will not
brook

On what she hates and loathes to look;
She told to Mortham she could ne'er

Behold me without secret fear,
Foreboding evil;—She may rue

To find her prophecy fall true!—
The war has weeded Rokeby's train,

Few followers in his halls remain;
If thy scheme miss, then, brief and
bold,

We are enow to storm the hold;
Bear off the plunder, and the dame,
And leave the castle all in flame."—

XXVII.

"Still art thou Valour's venturous
son!

Yet ponder first the risk to run :
The menials of the castle, true,
And stubborn to their charge, though
few;

The wall to scale—the moat to cross—
The wicket-grate—the inner fosse."—

—"Fool! if we blench for toys like
these,

On what fair guerdon can we seize?
Our hardest venture, to explore

Some wretched peasant's fenceless
door,

And the best prize we bear away,
The earnings of his sordid day."—

"A while thy hasty taunt forbear :
In sight of road more sure and fair,

Thou wouldst not choose, in blind-
fold wrath,

Or wantonness, a desperate path?
List, then;—for vantage or assault,

From gilded vane to dungeon-vault,
Each pass of Rokeby-house I know :

There is one postern, dark and low,
That issues at a secret spot,

By most neglected or forgot.
Now, could a spial of our train

On fair pretext admittance gain,
That sally-port might be unbarr'd :

Then, vain were battlement and
ward!"—

XXVIII.

"Now speak'st thou well:—to me the
same,

If force or art shall urge the game;
Indifferent, if like fox I wind,

Or spring like tiger on the hind.—
But, hark! our merry-men so gay

Troll forth another roundelay."—

Song.

"A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!

To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
 And press the rue for wine!
 A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
 A feather of the blue,
 A doublet of the Lincoln green,—
 No more of me you knew,
 My love!
 No more of me you knew.

“This morn is merry June, I trow,
 The rose is budding fain;
 But she shall bloom in winter snow,
 Ere we two meet again.”
 He turn'd his charger as he spake,
 Upon the river shore,
 He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
 Said, “Adieu for evermore,
 My love!
 And adieu for evermore.”—

XXIX.

“What youth is this, your band
 among,
 The best for minstrelsy and song
 In his wild notes seem aptly met
 A strain of pleasure and regret.”—
 “Edmund of Winston is his name;
 The hamlet sounded with the fame
 Of early hopes his childhood gave,—
 Now center'd all in Brignall cave!
 I watch him well—his wayward course
 Shows oft a tincture of remorse.
 Some early love-shaft grazed his
 heart,
 And oft the scar will ache and smart.
 Yet is he useful;—of the rest,
 But fits, the darling and the jest,
 His harp, his story, and his lay,
 Oft aid the idle hours away.
 When unemploy'd, each fiery mate
 Is ripe for mutinous debate.
 He tuned his strings e'en now—again
 He wakes them, with a blither strain.”

XXX.

Song.

ALLEN-A-DALE.

Allen-a-Dale has no fagot for burning,
 Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turn-
 ing,
 Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the
 spinning,

Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the
 winning.
 Come, read me my riddle! come,
 hearken my tale!
 And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-
 Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth* prances
 in pride,
 And he views his domains upon Ar-
 kindale side,
 The mere for his net, and the land
 for his game,
 The chase for the wild, and the park
 for the tame,
 Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer
 of the vale,
 Are less free to Lord Dacre than Al-
 len-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a
 knight,
 Though his spur be as sharp, and
 his blade be as bright;
 Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
 Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at
 his word;
 And the best of our nobles his bon-
 net will veil,
 Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore
 meets Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
 The mother, she ask'd of his house-
 hold and home:
 “Though the castle of Richmond
 stand fair on the hill,
 My hall,” quoth bold Allen, “shows
 gallanter still;
 'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its
 crescent so pale,
 And with all its bright spangles!”
 said Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother
 was stone;
 They lifted the latch, and they bade
 him begone;

* The ruins of Ravensworth Castle stand in the North Riding of Yorkshire, about three miles from the town of Richmond, and adjoining to the waste called the Forest of Arkingarth. It belonged originally to the powerful family of Fitz-Hugh, from whom it passed to the Lords Dacre of the South.

But loud, on the morrow, their wail
and their cry:
He had laugh'd on the lass with his
bonny black eye.
And she fled to the forest to hear a
love tale,
And the youth it was told by was
Allen-a-Dale!

XXXI.

"Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,
Love mingles ever in his lay.
But when his boyish wayward fit
Is o'er, he hath address and wit;
O! 'tis a brain of fire, can ape
Each dialect, each various shape."
"Nay, then, to aid thy project, Guy—
Soft! who comes here?"—"My trusty
spy.
Speak, Hamlin! hast thou lodged our
deer?"—

"I have—but two fair stags are near.
I watch'd her, as she slowly stray'd
From Eglston up Thorsgill glade;
But Wilfrid Wycliffe sought her side,
And then young Redmond, in his
pride,
Shot down to meet them on their way:
Much, as it seem'd, was theirs to say:
There's time to pitch both toil and
net,
Before their path be homeward set."
A hurried and a whisper'd speech
Did Bertram's will to Denzil teach;
Who, turning to the robber band,
Bade four, the bravest, take the brand.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

WHEN Denmark's raven soar'd on
high,
Triumphant through Northumbrian
sky,
Till, hovering near, her fatal croak
Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke,
And the broad shadow of her wing
Blacken'd each cataract and spring,
Where Tees in tumult leaves his
source,
Thundering o'er Caldron and High-
Force;

Beneath the shade the Northmen
came,
Fix'd on each vale a Runic name,
Rear'd high their altar's rugged stone,
And gave their Gods the land they
won.
Then, Balder, one bleak garth was
thine,
And one sweet brooklet's silver line,
And Woden's Croft did title gain
From the stern Father of the Slain;
But to the Monarch of the Mace,
That held in fight the foremost place,
To Odin's son, and Sifa's spouse,
Near Stratforth high they paid their
vows,
Remember'd Thor's victorious fame,
And gave the dell the Thunderer's
name.

II.

Yet Scald or Kemper err'd, I ween,
Who gave that soft and quiet scene,
With all its varied light and shade,
And every little sunny glade,
And the blithe brook that strolls
along
Its pebbled bed with summer song,
To the grim God of blood and scar,
The grizzly King of Northern War.
O, better were its banks assign'd
To spirits of a gentler kind!
For where the thicket groups recede,
And the rath primrose decks the
mead,
The velvet grass seems carpet meet
For the light fairies' lively feet.
Yon tufted knoll, with daisies strown,
Might make proud Oberon a throne,
While, hidden in the thicket nigh,
Puck should brood o'er his frolic sly;
And where profuse the wood-vetch
clings
Round ash and elm, in verdant rings,
Its pale and azure-pencill'd flower
Should canopy Titania's bower.

III.

Here rise no cliffs the vale to shade;
But, skirting every sunny glade,
In fair variety of green
The woodland lends its silvan screen.

Hoary, yet haughty, frowns the oak,
 Its boughs by weight of ages broke;
 And towers erect, in sable spire,
 The pine-tree scathed by lightning
 fire;

The drooping ash and birch, be-
 tween,

Hang their fair tresses o'er the green,
 And all beneath, at random grow
 Each coppice dwarf of varied show,
 Or, round the stems profusely twined,
 Fling summer odours on the wind.

Such varied group Urbino's hand
 Round Him of Tarsus nobly plann'd,
 What time he bade proud Athens
 own

On Mars's Mount the God unknown !
 Then grey Philosophy stood nigh,
 Though bent by age, in spirit high :
 Then rose the scar-seam'd veteran's
 spear,

There Grecian Beauty bent to hear,
 While Childhood at her foot was
 placed,

Or clung delighted to her waist.

IV.

"And rest we here," Matilda said,
 And sat her in the varying shade.

"Chance-met, we well may steal an
 hour,

To friendship due, from fortune's
 power.

Thou, Wilfrid, ever kind, must lend
 Thy counsel to thy sister-friend ;
 And, Redmond, thou, at my behest,
 No farther urge thy desperate 'quest,
 For to my care a charge is left,
 Dangerous to one of aid bereft;
 Wellnigh an orphan, and alone,
 Captive her sire, her house o'er-
 thrown."

Wilfrid, with wonted kindness
 graced,

Beside her on the turf she placed;
 Then paused, with downcast look
 and eye,

Nor bade young Redmond seat him
 nigh.

Her conscious diffidence he saw,
 Drew backward, as in modest awe,

And sat a little space removed,
 Unmark'd to gaze on her he loved.

V.

Wreathed in its dark-brown rings,
 her hair

Half hid Matilda's forehead fair,
 Half hid and half reveal'd to view
 Her full dark eye of hazel hue.

The rose, with faint and feeble
 streak,

So slightly tinged the maiden's
 cheek,

That you had said her hue was pale;
 But if she faced the summer gale,
 Or spoke, or sung, or quicker moved,
 Or heard the praise of those she
 loved,

Or when of interest was express'd
 Aught that waked feeling in her
 breast,

The mantling blood in ready play
 Rival'd the blush of rising day.

There was a soft and pensive grace,
 A cast of thought upon her face,

That suited well the forehead high,
 The eyelash dark, and downcast eye;
 The mild expression spoke a mind

In duty firm, composed, resign'd;
 'Tis that which Roman art has given.
 To mark their maiden Queen of
 Heaven.

In hours of sport, that mood gave
 way

To Fancy's light and frolic play ;
 And when the dance, or tale, or song,
 In harmless mirth sped time along,
 Full oft her doating sire would call
 His Maud the merriest of them all.

But days of war and civil crime,
 Allow'd but ill such festal time,
 And her soft pensiveness of brow
 Had deepen'd into sadness now.

In Marston field her father ta'en,
 Her friends dispersed, brave Mor-
 tham slain,

While every ill her soul foretold,
 From Oswald's thirst of power and
 gold,

And boding thoughts that she must
 part

With a soft vision of her heart,—

All lower'd around the lovely maid,
To darken her dejection's shade.

VI.

Who has not heard—while Erin yet
Strove 'gainst the Saxon's iron bit—
Who has not heard how brave
O'Neale

In English blood imbrued his steel,
Against St. George's cross blazed
high

The banners of his Tanistry,
To fiery Essex gave the foil,
And reign'd a prince on Ulster's soil?
But chief arose his victor pride,
When that brave Marshal fought and
died,

And Avon-Duff to ocean bore
His billows red with Saxon gore.
'Twas first in that disastrous fight,
Rokeby and Mortham, proved their
might.

There had they fallen 'mongst the
rest,

But pity touch'd a chieftain's breast;
The Tanist he to great O'Neale;
He check'd his followers' bloody zeal,
To quarter took the kinsmen bold,
And bore them to his mountain-hold,
Gave them each silvan joy to know,
Slieve-Donard's cliffs and woods could
show,

Shared with them Erin's feal cheer,
Show'd them the chase of wolf and
deer,

And, when a fitting time was come,
Safe and unransom'd sent them
home,

Loaded with many a gift, to prove
A generous foe's respect and love.

VII.

Years speed away. On Rokeby's head
Some touch of early snow was shed;
Calm he enjoy'd, by Greta's wave,
The peace which James the Peaceful
gave,

While Mortham, far beyond the
main,

Waged his fierce wars on Indian
Spain.—

It chanced upon a wintry night,

That whiten'd Stanmore's stormy
height,

The chase was o'er, the stag was kill'd,
In Rokeby hall the cup were fill'd,
And by the huge stone chimney sate
The Knight in hospitable state.

Moonless the sky, the hour was late,
When a loud summons shook the gate,
And sore for entrance and for aid
A voice of foreign accent pray'd.

The porter answer'd to the call,
And instant rushed into the hall
A Man, whose aspect and attire
Startled the circle by the fire.

VIII.

His plaited hair in elf-locks spread
Around his bare and matted head;
On leg and thigh, close stretch'd and
trim,

His vesture show'd the sinewy limb;
In saffron dyed, a linen vest
Was frequent folded round his breast;
A mantle long and loose he wore,
Shaggy with ice, and stain'd with
gore.

He clasp'd a burden to his heart,
And, resting on a knotted dart,
The snow from hair and beard he
shook,

And round him gazed with wilder'd
look.

Then up the hall, with staggering
pace,

He hasten'd by the blaze to place,
Half lifeless from the bitter air,
His load, a Boy of beauty rare.

To Rokeby, next, he louted low,
Then stood erect his tale to show,
With wild majestic port and tone,
Like envoy of some barbarous throne.

“Sir Richard, Lord of Rokeby, hear!
Turlough O'Neale salutes thee dear;
He graces thee, and to thy care
Young Redmond gives, his grandson
fair.

He bids thee breed him as thy son,
For Turlough's days of joy are done;
And other lords have seized his land,
And faint and feeble is his hand;
And all the glory of Tyrone
Is like a morning vapour flown.

To bind the duty on thy soul,
 He bids thee think on Erin's bowl!
 If any wrong the young O'Neale,
 He bids thee think of Erin's steel.
 To Mortham first this charge was due,
 But, in his absence, honours you.—
 Now is my master's message by,
 And Ferraught will contented die.

IX.

His look grew fix'd, his cheek grew
 pale,
 He sunk when he had told his tale;
 For, hid beneath his mantle wide,
 A mortal wound was in his side.
 Vain was all aid—in terror wild,
 And sorrow, scream'd the orphan
 Child.
 Poor Ferraught raised his wistful
 eyes,
 And faintly strove to soothe his cries;
 All reckless of his dying pain,
 He blest and blest him o'er again!
 And kiss'd the little hands outspread,
 And kiss'd and cross'd the infant
 head,
 And, in his native tongue and phrase,
 Pray'd to each Saint to watch his
 days;
 Then all his strength together drew,
 The charge to Rokeby to renew.
 When half was falter'd from his
 breast,
 And half by dying signs express'd,
 "Bless the O'Neale!" he faintly said,
 And thus the faithful spirit fled.

X.

'Twas long ere soothing might prevail
 Upon the Child to end the tale;
 And then he said, that from his home
 His grandsire had been forced to
 roam,
 Which had not been if Redmond's
 hand
 Had but had strength to draw the
 brand,
 The brand of Lenaugh More the Red,
 That hung beside the grey wolf's
 head.—
 'Twas from his broken phrase des-
 cried,

His foster-father was his guide,
 Who, in his charge, from Ulster bore
 Letters and gifts a goodly store:
 But ruffians met them in the wood,
 Ferraught in battle boldly stood,
 Till wounded and o'erpower'd at
 length,
 And stripp'd of all, his failing
 strength
 Just bore him here—and then the
 child
 Renew'd again his moaning wild.

XI.

The tear down childhood's cheek
 that flows,
 Is like the dewdrop on the rose;
 When next the summer breeze comes
 by,
 And waves the bush, the flower is dry.
 Won by their care, the orphan Child
 Soon on his new protector smiled,
 With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,
 Through his thick curls of flaxen hair,
 But blithest laugh'd that cheek and
 eye,
 When Rokeby's little Maid was nigh;
 'Twas his, with elder brother's pride,
 Matilda's tottering steps to guide;
 His native lays in Irish tongue,
 To soothe her infant ear he sung,
 And primrose twined with daisy fair,
 To form a chaplet for her hair.
 By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's
 strand,
 The children still were hand in hand,
 And good Sir Richard smiling eyed
 The early knot so kindly tied.

XII.

But summer months bring wilding
 shoot
 From bud to bloom, from bloom to
 fruit;
 And years draw on our human span,
 From child to boy, from boy to man;
 And soon in Rokeby's woods is seen
 A gallant boy in hunter's green.
 He loves to wake the felon boar,
 In his dark haunt on Greta's shore,
 And loves, against the deer so dun,
 To draw the shaft, or lift the gun,

Yet more he loves, in autumn prime,
The hazel's spreading boughs to
climb,
And down its cluster'd stores to hail,
Where young Matilda holds her veil.
And she, whose veil receives the
shower,

Is alter'd too, and knows her power;
Assumes a mistress's pride,
Her Redmond's dangerous sports to
chide;

Yet listens still to hear him tell
How the grim wild-boar fought and
fell,

How at his fall the bugle rung,
Till rock and greenwood answer
flung;

Then blesses her, that man can find
A pastime of such savage kind!

XIII.

But Redmond knew to weave his tale
So well with praise of wood and dale,
And knew so well each point to trace,
Gives living interest to the chase,
And knew so well o'er all to throw
His spirit's wild romantic glow,
That, while she blamed, and while
she fear'd,
She loved each venturous tale she
heard.

Oft, too, when drifted snow and rain
To bower and hall their steps re-
strain,

Together they explored the page
Of glowing bard or gifted sage:
 Oft, placed the evening fire beside,
The minstrel art alternate tried,
While gladsome harp and lively lay
Bade winter night flit fast away:
 Thus, from their childhood, blending
still

Their sport, their study, and their
skill,

An union of the soul they prove,
But must not think that it was love.
But though they dared not, envious
Fame

Soon dared to give that union name;
And when so often, side by side,
From year to year the pair she eyed,

She sometimes blamed the good old
Knight,
As dull of ear and dim of sight,
Sometimes his purpose would declare,
That young O'Neale should wed his
heir.

XIV.

The suit of Wilfrid rent disguise
And bandage from the lovers' eyes;
'Twas plain that Oswald, for his son,
Had Rokeby's favour well nigh won.
Now must they meet with change of
cheer,

With mutual looks of shame and fear;
Now must Matilda stray apart,
To school her disobedient heart:
And Redmond now alone must rue
The love he never can subdue.

But factions rose, and Rokeby sware
No rebel's son should wed his heir;
And Redmond, nurtured while a
child

In many a bard's traditions wild,
Now sought the lonely wood or
stream,

To cherish there a happier dream,
Of maiden won by sword or lance,
As in the regions of romance;
And count the heroes of his line,
Great Nial of the Pledges Nine,
Shane-Dymas wild, and Geraldine,
And Connan-more, who vowed his
race,

For ever to the fight and chase,
And cursed him, of his lineage born,
Should sheath the sword to reap the
corn,

Or leave the mountain and the wold,
To shroud himself in castled hold.
From such examples hope he drew,
And brighten'd as the trumpet blew.

XV.

If brides were won by heart and
blade,

Redmond had both his cause to aid,
And all beside of nurture rare
That might besem a baron's heir.
Turlough O'Neale, in Erin's strife,
On Rokeby's Lord bestow'd his life,
And well did Rokeby's generous
Knight

Young Redmond for the deed requite.
 Nor was his liberal care and cost
 Upon the gallant stripling lost;
 Seek the North-Riding broad and
 wide,
 Like Redmond none could steed be-
 stride;
 From Tynemouth search to Cumber-
 land,
 Like Redmond none could wield a
 brand;
 And then, of humour kind and free,
 And bearing him to each degree
 With frank and fearless courtesy,
 There never youth was form'd to steal
 Upon the heart like brave O'Neale.

XVI.

Sir Richard loved him as his son;
 And when the days of peace were
 done,
 And to the gales of war he gave
 The banner of his sires to wave,
 Redmond, distinguish'd by his care,
 He chose that honour'd flag to bear,
 And named his page, the next degree,
 In that old time, to chivalry.
 In five pitch'd fields he well main-
 tain'd
 The honour'd place his worth ob-
 tain'd,
 And high was Redmond's youthful
 name
 Blaz'd in the roll of martial fame.
 Had fortune smiled on Marston fight,
 The eve had seen him dubb'd a knight;
 Twice, 'mid the battle's doubtful
 strife,
 Of Rokeby's Lord he saved the life.
 But when he saw him prisoner made,
 He kiss'd and then resign'd his blade,
 And yielded him an easy prey
 To those who led the Knight away;
 Resolved Matilda's sire should prove
 In prison, as in fight, his love.

XVII.

When lovers meet in adverse hour,
 'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a
 shower,
 A watery ray, an instant seen
 The darkly closing clouds between.

As Redmond on the turf reclined,
 The past and present fill'd his mind:
 "It was not thus," Affection said,
 "I dream'd of my return, dear maid!
 Not thus, when from thy trembling
 hand,

I took the banner and the brand,
 When round me, as the bugles blew,
 Their blades three hundred warriors
 drew,
 And, while the standard I unroll'd,
 Clash'd their bright arms, with clam-
 our bold.

Where is that banner now?—its pride
 Lies 'whelm'd in Ouse's sullen tide!
 Where now these warriors?—in their
 gore,

They cumber Marston's dismal moor!
 And what avails a useless brand,
 Held by a captive's shackled hand,
 That only would his life retain,
 To aid thy sire to bear his chain!"
 Thus Redmond to himself apart;
 Nor lighter was his rival's heart;
 For Wilfrid, while his generous soul
 Disdain'd to profit by control,
 By many a sign could mark too plain,
 Save with such aid, his hopes were
 vain.—

But now Matilda's accents stole
 On the dark visions of their soul,
 And bade their mournful musing fly,
 Like mist before the zephyr's sigh.

XVIII.

"I need not to my friends recall,
 How Mortham shunn'd my father's
 hall;

A man of silence and of woe,
 Yet ever anxious to bestow
 On my poor self whate'er could prove
 A kinsman's confidence and love.
 My feeble aid could sometimes chase
 The clouds of sorrow for a space:
 But oftener, fix'd beyond my power,
 I mark'd his deep despondence
 lower.

One dismal cause, by all unguess'd,
 His fearful confidence confess'd;
 And twice it was my hap to see
 Examples of that agony,
 Which for a season can o'erstrain

And wreck the structure of the brain.
He had the awful power to know
The approaching mental overthrow,
And while his mind had courage yet
To struggle with the dreadful fit,
The victim writhed against its throes,
Like wretch beneath a murderer's
blows.

This malady, I well could mark,
Sprung from some direful cause and
dark;

But still he kept its source conceal'd,
Till arming for the civil field;
Then in my charge he bade me hold
A treasure huge of gems and gold,
With this disjointed dismal scroll,
That tells the secret of his soul,
In such wild words as oft betray
A mind by anguish forced astray."—

XIX.

MORTHAM'S HISTORY.

"Matilda! thou hast seen me start,
As if a dagger thrill'd my heart,
When it has hap'd some casual
phrase

Waked memory of my former days.
Believe, that few can backward cast
Their thoughts with pleasure on the
past;

But I!—my youth was rash and vain,
And blood and rage my manhood
stain,
And my grey hairs must now de-
scend

To my cold grave without a friend!
Even thou, Matilda, wilt disown
Thy kinsman, when his guilt is
known.

And must I lift the bloody veil,
That hides my dark and fatal tale!
I must—I will—Pale phantom, cease!
Leave me one little hour in peace!
Thus haunted, think'st thou I have
skill

Thine own commission to fulfil?
Or, while thou point'st with gesture
fierce,

Thy blighted cheek, thy bloody
hearse,

How can I paint thee as thou wert,
So fair in face, so warm in heart!

XX.

"Yes, she was fair!—Matilda, thou
Hast a soft sadness on thy brow;
But hers was like the sunny glow,
That laughs on earth and all below!
We wedded secret—there was need—
Differing in country and in creed;
And, when to Mortham's tower she
came,

We mentioned not her race and name,
Until thy sire, who fought afar,
Should turn him home from foreign
war,

On whose kind influence we relied
To soothe her father's ire and pride.
Few months we lived retired, un-
known,

To all but one dear friend alone,
One darling friend—I spare his
shame,

I will not write the villain's name!
My trespasses I might forget,
And sue in vengeance for the debt
Due by a brother worm to me,
Ungrateful to God's clemency,
That spared me penitential time,
Nor cut me off amid my crime.—

XXI.

"A kindly smile to all she lent,
But on her husband's friend 'twas
bent

So kind, that from its harmless glee,
The wretch misconstrued villany.
Repulsed in his presumptuous love,
A vengeful snare the traitor wove.
Alone we sat—the flask had flow'd,
My blood with heat unwonted glow'd.
When through the alley'd walk we
spied

With hurried step my Edith glide,
Cowering beneath the verdant screen,
As one unwilling to be seen.

Words cannot paint the fiendish
smile,

That curl'd the traitor's cheek the
while!

Fiercely I question'd of the cause;
He made a cold and artful pause,
Then pray'd it might not chafe my
mood—

'There was a gallant in the wood!'

We had been shooting at the deer;
My cross-bow (evil chance!) was near:
That ready weapon of my wrath
I caught, and, hasting up the path,
In the yew grove my wife I found,
A stranger's arms her neck had
bound!

I mark'd his heart—the bow I drew—
I loosed the shaft—'twas more than
true!

I found my Edith's dying charms
Lock'd in her murder'd brother's
arms!

He came in secret to enquire
Her state, and reconcile her sire.

XXII.

“All fled my rage—the villain first,
Whose craft my jealousy had nursed;
He sought in far and foreign clime
To 'scape the vengeance of his crime.
The manner of the slaughter done
Was known to few, my guilt to none;
Some tale my faithful steward
framed—

I know not what—of shaft mis-aim'd;
And even from those the act who
knew,

He hid the hand from which it flew.
Untouch'd by human laws I stood,
But God had heard the cry of blood!
There is a blank upon my mind,
A fearful vision ill-defined,

Of raving till my flesh was torn,
Of dungeon-bolts and fetters worn—
And when I waked to woe more mild,
And question'd of my infant child—
(Have I not written, that she bare
A boy, like summer morning fair?)—
With looks confused my menials tell
That armed men in Mortham dell
Beset the nurse's evening way,
And bore her, with her charge, away.
My faithless friend, and none but he,
Could profit by this villany;
Him then, I sought, with purpose
dread

Of treble vengeance on his head!
He 'scaped me—but my bosom's
wound

Some faint relief from wandering
found;

And over distant land and sea
I bore my load of misery.

XXIII.

“'Twas then that fate my footsteps led
Among a daring crew and dread,
With whom full oft my bated life
I ventured in such desperate strife,
That even my fierce associates saw
My frantic deeds with doubt and awe.
Much then I learn'd, and much can
show,

Of human guilt and human woe,
Yet ne'er have, in my wanderings,
known

A wretch, whose sorrows match'd
my own!—

It chanced, that after battle fray,
Upon the bloody field we lay;
The yellow moon her lustre shed
Upon the wounded and the dead,
While, sense in toil and wassail
drown'd,

My ruffian comrades slept around,
'There came a voice—its silver tone
Was soft, Matilda, as thine own—
'Ah, wretch!' it said, 'what makest
thou here,

While unavenged my bloody bier,
While unprotected lives mine heir,
Without a father's name and care?’

XXIV.

“I heard—obey'd—and homeward
drew;

The fiercest of our desperate crew
I brought at time of need to aid
My purposed vengeance, long delay'd.
But, humble be my thanks to Heaven,
That better hopes and thoughts has
given,

And by our Lord's dear prayer has
taught,

Mercy by mercy must be bought!—
Let me in misery rejoice—
I've seen his face—I've heard his
voice—

I claim'd of him my only child—
As he disown'd the theft, he smiled!
That very calm and callous look,
That fiendish sneer his visage took,
As when he said, in scornful mood,

'There is a gallant in the wood!'—
I did not slay him as he stood—
All praise be to my Maker given!
Long suffrance is one path to heav-
en."

XXV.

Thus far the woful tale was heard,
When something in the thicket stirr'd.
Up Redmond sprung; the villain Guy,
(For he it was that lurk'd so nigh,)
Drew back—he durst not cross his
steel

A moment's space with brave O'Neale,
For all the treasured gold that rests
In Mortham's iron-banded chests.
Redmond resumed his seat;—he said,
Some roe was rustling in the shade.
Bertram laugh'd grimly when he saw
His timorous comrade backward
draw;

"A trusty mate art thou, to fear
A single arm, and aid so near!
Yet have I seen thee mark a deer.
Give me thy carabine—I'll show
An art that thou wilt gladly know,
How thou mayst safely quell a foe."

XXVI.

On hands and knees fierce Bertram
drew

The spreading birch and hazels
through,

Till he had Redmond full in view;
The gun he levell'd—Mark like this
Was Bertram never known to miss,
When fair opposed to him there sate
An object of his mortal hate.
That day young Redmond's death
had seen,

But twice Matilda came between
The carabine and Redmond's breast,
Just ere the spring his finger press'd.
A deadly oath the ruffian swore,
But yet his fell design forbore:
"It ne'er," he mutter'd, "shall be
said,

That thus I scath'd thee, haughty
maid!"

Then moved to seek more open aim,
When to his side Guy Denzil came:
"Bertram, forbear!—we are undone
For ever, if thou fire the gun.

By all the fiends, an armed force
Descends the dell, of foot and horse!
We perish if they hear a shot—
Madman! we have a safer plot—
Nay, friend, be ruled, and bear thee
back!

Behold, down yonder hollow track,
The warlike leader of the band
Comes, with his broadsword in his
hand."

Bertram look'd up; he saw, he knew
That Denzil's fears had counsell'd
true,

Then cursed his fortune and with-
drew,

Threaded the woodlands undescried,
And gained the cave on Greta side.

XXVII.

They whom dark Bertram, in his
wrath,
Doom'd to captivity or death,
Their thoughts to one sad subject
lent,

Saw not nor heard the ambushment.
Heedless and unconcern'd they sate,
While on the very verge of fate;
Heedless and unconcern'd remain'd,
When Heaven the murderer's arm re-
strain'd;

As ships drift darkling down the tide,
Nor see the shelves o'er which they
glide.

Uninterrupted thus they heard
What Mortham's closing tale declared.
He spoke of wealth as of a load,
By Fortune on a wretch bestow'd,
In bitter mockery of hate,
His cureless woes to aggravate;
But yet he pray'd Matilda's care
Might save that treasure for his heir—
His Edith's son—for still he raved
As confident his life was saved;
In frequent vision, he averr'd,
He saw his face, his voice he heard;
Then argued calm—had murder been,
The blood, the corpses, had been
seen;

Some had pretended, too, to mark
On Windermere a stranger bark,
Whose crew, with jealous care, yet
mild,

Guarded a female and a child.
While these faint proofs he told and
press'd,

Hope seem'd to kindle in his breast;
Though inconsistent, vague, and vain,
It warp'd his judgment, and his
brain.

XXVIII.

These solemn words his story close:—
“Heaven witness for me, that I chose
My part in this sad civil fight,
Moved by no cause but England's
right.

My country's groans have bid me
draw

My sword for Gospel and for law;—
These righted, I fling arms aside,
And seek my son through Europe
wide,

My wealth, on which a kinsman nigh
Already casts a grasping eye,
With thee may unsuspected lie.

When of my death Matilda hears,
Let her retain her trust three years;
If none, from me, the treasure claim,
Perish'd is Mortham's race and name.

Then let it leave her generous hand,
And flow in bounty o'er the land;
Soften the wounded prisoner's lot,
Rebuild the peasant's ruin'd cot;
So spoils, acquired by fight afar,
Shall mitigate domestic war.”

XXIX.

The generous youths, who well had
known

Of Mortham's mind the powerful tone,
To that high mind, by sorrow
swerved,

Gave sympathy his woes deserved;
But Wilfrid chief, who saw reveal'd
Why Mortham wish'd his life conceal'd,

In secret, doubtless, to pursue
The schemes his wilder'd fancy drew.
Thoughtful he heard Matilda tell,
That she would share her father's cell,
His partner of captivity,
Where'er his prison-house should be;
Yet grieved to think that Rokeby hall,
Dismantled, and forsook by all,

Open to rapine and to stealth,
Had now no safe-guard for the wealth
Intrusted by her kinsman kind,
And for such noble use design'd.

“Was Barnard Castle then her choice”
Wilfrid enquired with hasty voice,
“Since there the victor's laws ordain,
Her father must a space remain?”
A flutter'd hope his accents shook,
A flutter'd joy was in his look.

Matilda hasten'd to reply,
For anger flash'd in Redmond's eye;—
“Duty,” she said, with gentle grace,
“Kind Wilfrid, has no choice of place;
Else had I for my sire assign'd
Prison less galling to his mind,
Than that his wild-wood haunts
which sees

And hears the murmur of the Tces,
Recalling thus, with every glance,
What captive's sorrow can enhance;
But where those woes are highest,
there

Needs Rokeby most his daughter's
care.”

XXX.

He felt the kindly check she gave,
And stood abash'd—then answer'd
grave—

“I sought thy purpose, noble maid,
Thy doubts to clear, thy schemes to
aid.

I have beneath mine own command,
So wills my sire, a gallant band,
And well could send some horseman
wight

To bear the treasure forth by night,
And so bestow it as you deem
In these ill days may safest seem.”—

“Thanks, gentle Wilfrid, thanks,”
she said:

“O, be it not one day delay'd!
And, more, thy sister-friend to aid,
Be thou thyself content to hold,
In thine own keeping, Mortham's
gold,

Safest with thee.”—While thus she
spoke,

Arm'd soldiers on their converse
broke,

The same of whose approach afraid,

The ruffians left their ambuscade,
 Their chief to Wilfrid bended low,
 Then look'd around as for a foe.
 "What mean'st thou, friend," young
 Wycliffe said,
 "Why thus in arms beset the
 glade?"—
 "That would I gladly learn from you:
 For up my squadron as I drew,
 To exercise our martial game,
 Upon the moor of Barninghame,
 A stranger told you were waylaid,
 Surrounded, and to death betray'd.
 He had a leader's voice, I ween,
 A falcon glance, a warrior's mien.
 He bade me bring you instant aid;
 I doubted not, and I obey'd."

XXXI.

Wilfrid changed colour, and, amazed,
 Turn'd short, and on the speaker
 gazed;
 While Redmond every thicket round
 Track'd earnest as a questing hound,
 And Denzil's carabine he found;
 Sure evidence, by which they knew
 The warning was as kind as true.
 Wisest it seem'd, with cautious speed
 To leave the dell. It was agreed,
 That Redmond, with Matilda fair,
 And fitting guard, should home re-
 pair;
 At nightfall Wilfrid should attend,
 With a strong band, his sister-friend,
 To bear with her from Rokeby's
 bowers
 To Barnard Castle's lofty towers,
 Secret and safe the banded chests,
 In which the wealth of Mortham
 rests.
 This hasty purpose fix'd, they part,
 Each with a grieved and anxious
 heart.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

THE sultry summer day is done,
 The western hills have hid the sun,
 But mountain peak and village spire
 Retain reflections of his fire.

Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
 To those that gaze from Toller-hill;
 Distant and high, the tower of Bowes
 Like steel upon the anvil glows;
 And Stanmore's ridge, behind that
 lay,
 Rich with the spoils of parting day,
 In crimson and in gold array'd,
 Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
 Then slow resigns to darkening
 heaven
 The tints which brighter hours had
 given.
 Thus aged men, full loth and slow,
 The vanities of life forego,
 And count their youthful follies o'er,
 Till Memory lends her light no more.

II.

The eve, that slow on upland fades,
 Has darker closed on Rokeby's
 glades,
 Where, sunk within their banks pro-
 found,
 Her guardian streams to meeting
 wound.
 The stately oaks, whose sombre
 frown
 Of noontide made a twilight brown,
 Impervious now to fainter light,
 Of twilight make an early night.
 Hoarse into middle air arose
 The vespers of the roosting crows,
 And with congenial murmurs seem
 To wake the Genii of the stream;
 For louder clamour'd Greta's tide,
 And Tees in deeper voice replied.
 And fitful waked the evening wind,
 Fitful in sighs its breath resign'd.
 Wilfrid, whose fancy-nurtured soul
 Felt in the scene a soft control,
 With lighter footstep press'd the
 ground,
 And oft paused to look around;
 And, though his path was to his love,
 Could not but linger in the grove,
 To drink the thrilling interest dear,
 Of awful pleasure check'd by fear.
 Such inconsistent moods have we,
 Even when our passions strike the
 key.

III.

Now, through the wood's dark mazes
past,

The opening lawn he reach'd at last,
Where, silver'd by the moonlight ray,
The ancient Hall before him lay.
Those martial terrors long were fled,
That frown'd of old around its head:
The battlements, the turrets grey,
Seem'd half abandon'd to decay;
On barbican and keep of stone
Stern Time the foe's work had
done;

Where banners the invader braved,
The harebell now and wallflower
waved;

In the rude guard-room, where of
yore

Their weary hours the warders wore,
Now, while the cheerful fagots blaze,
On the paved floor the spindle plays;
The flanking guns dismantled lie,
The moat is ruinous and dry,
The grim portcullis gone—and all
The fortress turn'd to peaceful Hall.

IV.

But yet precautions, lately ta'en,
Show'd danger's day revived again;
The court-yard wall show'd marks of
care,

The fall'n defences to repair,
Lending such strength as might with-
stand,

The insult of marauding band.
The beams once more were taught to
bear

The trembling drawbridge into air,
And not, till question'd o'er and o'er,
For Wilfrid oped the jealous door,
And when he entered, bolt and bar
Resumed their place with sullen jar;
Then, as he cross'd the vaulted porch,
The old grey porter raised his torch,
And view'd him o'er, from foot to
head,

Ere to the hall his steps he led.
That huge old hall, of knightly state,
Dismantled seem'd and desolate.

The moon through transom-shafts of
stone,

Which cross'd the latticed oriels,
shone,

And by the mournful light she gave,
The Gothic vault seem'd funeral cave.
Pennon and banner waved no more
O'er beams of stag and tusks of boar,
Nor glimmering arms were marshall'd
seen,

To glance those silvan spoils between.
Those arms, those ensigns, borne
away,

Accomplish'd Rokeby's brave array,
But all were lost on Marston's day!
Yet here and there the moonbeams
fall

Where armour yet adorns the wall,
Cumbrous in size, uncouth to sight,
And useless in the modern fight!
Like veteran relic of the wars,
Known only by neglected scars.

V.

Matilda soon to greet him came,
And bade them light the evening
flame;

Said, all for parting was prepared,
And tarried but for Wilfrid's guard.
But then, reluctant to unfold
His father's avarice of gold,
He hinted, that lest jealous eye
Should on their precious burden pry,
He judged it best the castle gate
To enter when the night wore late;
And therefore he had left command
With those he trusted of his band,
That they should be at Rokeby met,
What time the midnight-watch was
set.

Now Redmond came, whose anxious
care

Till then was busied to prepare
All needful, meetly to arrange
The mansion for its mournful change.
With Wilfrid's care and kindness
pleased,

His cold unready hand he seized,
And press'd it, till his kindly strain
The gentle youth return'd again.
Seem'd as between them this was
said,

“A while let jealousy be dead;

And let our contest be, whose care
Shall best assist this helpless fair."

VI.

There was no speech the truce to bind,
It was a compact of the mind,—
A generous thought, at once impress'd
On either rival's generous breast.
Matilda well the secret took,
From sudden change of mien and
look;

And—for not small had been her fear
Of jealous ire and danger near—
Felt, even in her dejected state,
A joy beyond the reach of fate.
They closed beside the chimney's
blaze,

And talk'd and hoped for happier
days,

And lent their spirits' rising glow
A while to gild impending woe;—
High privilege of youthful time,
Worth all the pleasures of our prime!
The bickering fagot sparkled bright,
And gave the scene of love to sight,
Bade Wilfrid's cheek more lively glow,
Play'd on Matilda's neck of snow,
Her nut-brown curls and forehead
high,

And laugh'd in Redmond's azure eye.
Two lovers by the maiden sate,
Without a glance of jealous hate;
The maid her lovers sat between,
With open brow and equal mien;—
It is a sight but rarely spied,
Thanks to man's wrath and woman's
pride.

VII.

While thus in peaceful guise they sate,
A knock alarm'd the outer gate,
And ere the tardy porter stirr'd,
The tinkling of a harp was heard.
A manly voice of mellow swell,
Bore burden to the music well.

Song.

"Summer eve is gone and past,
Summer dew is falling fast;—
I have wander'd all the day,
Do not bid me farther stray!
Gentle hearts, of gentle kin,
Take the wandering harper in!"

But the stern porter answer gave,
With "Get thee hence, thou stroll-
ing knave.

The king wants soldiers; war, I trow,
Were meeter trade for such as thou."
At this unkind reproof, again
Answer'd the ready Minstrel's-strain.

Song resumed.

"Bid not me, in battle-field,
Buckler lift, or broadsword wield!
All my strength and all my art
Is to touch the gentle heart,
With the wizard notes that ring
From the peaceful minstrel string."

The porter, all unmoved, replied,—
"Depart in peace, with Heaven to
guide;

If longer by the gate thou dwell,
Trust me, thou shalt not part so well."

VIII.

With somewhat of appealing look,
The harper's part young Wilfrid took:
"These notes so wild and ready
thrill,

They show no vulgar minstrel's skill;
Hard were his task to seek a home
More distant, since the night is come;
And for his faith I dare engage—
Your Harpool's blood is sour'd by
age;

His gate, once readily display'd,
To greet the friend, the poor to aid,
Now even to me, though known of old,
Did but reluctantly unfold."

"O blame not, as poor Harpool's
crime,

An evil of this evil time.

He deems dependent on his care
The safety of his patron's heir,
Nor judges meet to ope the tower
To guest unknown at parting hour,
Urging his duty to excess
Of rough and stubborn faithfulness.
For this poor harper, I would fain
He may relax:—Hark to his strain!"—

IX.

Song resumed.

"I have song of war for nig
Lay of love for lady bright,

Fairy tale to lull the heir,
Goblin grim the maids to scare.
Dark the night, and long till day,
Do not bid me farther stray!

“Rokeby’s lords of martial fame,
I can count them name by name;
Legends of their line there be,
Known to few, but known to me;
If you honour Rokeby’s kin,
Take the wandering harper in!

“Rokeby’s lords had fair regard
For the harp, and for the bard:
Baron’s race throve never well,
Where the curse of minstrel fell
If you love that noble kin,
Take the weary harper in!”—

“Hark! Harpool parleys—there is
hope,”
Said Redmond, “that the gate will
ope.”—

—“For all thy brag and boast, I
trow,
Nought know’st thou of the Felon
Sow,”

Quoth Harpool, “nor how Greta-
side

She roam’d, and Rokeby forest wide;
Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the
beast

To Richmond’s friars to make a feast.
Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
That well could strike with sword
amain,

And of the valiant son of Spain,
Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir
Ralph:

There were a jest to make us laugh!
If thou canst tell it, in yon shed
Thou’st won thy supper and thy
bed.”

X.

Matilda smiled; “Cold hope,” said
she,

“From Harpool’s love of minstrelsy!
But, for this harper, may we dare,
Redmond, to mend his couch and
fare?”—

“O, ask me not!—At minstrel-string

My heart from infancy would spring;
Nor can I hear its simplest strain,
But it brings Erin’s dream again,
When placed by Owen Lysagh’s knee.
(The Filea of O’Neale was he,
A blind and bearded man, whose old
Was sacred as a prophet’s held,)
I’ve seen a ring of rugged kerne,
With aspects shaggy, wild, and stern,
Enchanted by the master’s lay,
Linger around the livelong day,
Shift from wild rage to wilder glee,
To love, to grief, to ecstasy,
And feel each varied change of soul
Obedient to the bard’s control.—
Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
Shieve-Donard’s oak shall light no
more;

Nor Owen’s harp, beside the blaze,
Tell maiden’s love, or hero’s praise!
The mantling brambles hide thy
hearth,

Centre of hospitable mirth;
All undistinguish’d in the glade,
My sires’ glad home is prostrate laid,
Their vassals wander wide and far,
Serve foreign lords in distant war,
And now the stranger’s sons enjoy
The lovely woods of Clandeboy!”
He spoke, and proudly turn’d aside,
The starting tear to dry and hide.

XI.

Matilda’s dark and soften’d eye
Was glistening ere O’Neale’s was dry.
Her hand upon his arm she laid,—

“It is the will of Heaven,” she said.
“And think’st thou, Redmond, I can
part

From this loved home with lightsome
hearth,

Leaving to wild neglect whate’er
Even from my infancy was dear?
For in this calm domestic bound
Were all Matilda’s pleasure found.
That hearth, my sire was wont to
grace,

Full soon may be a stranger’s place;
This hall, in which a child I play’d,
Like thine, dear Redmond, lowly
laid,

The bramble and the thorn may braid;
Or, pass'd for aye from me and mine,
It ne'er may shelter Rokeby's line.
Yet is this consolation given,
My Redmond—'tis the will of Heaven."

Her word, her action, and her phrase,
Were kindly as in early days;
For cold reserve had lost its power,
In sorrow's sympathetic hour.
Young Redmond dared not trust his voice;
But rather had it been his choice
To share that melancholy hour,
Than, arm'd with all a chieftain's power,
In full possession to enjoy
Shieve-Donard wide, and Clandeboy.

XII.

The blood left Wilfrid's ashen cheek;
Matilda sees, and hastes to speak.—
"Happy in friendship's ready aid,
Let all my murmurs here be staid!
And Rokeby's Maiden will not part
From Rokeby's hall with moody heart.

This night at least, for Rokeby's fame,
The hospitable hearth shall flame,
And, ere its native heir retire,
Find for the wanderer rest and fire,
While this poor harper, by the blaze,
Recounts the tale of other days.
Bid Harpool ope the door with speed,
Admit him, and relieve each need.—
Meantime, kind Wycliffe, wilt thou try

Thy minstrel skill?—Nay, no reply—
And look not sad!—I guess thy thought,

Thy verse with laurels would be bought;

And poor Matilda, landless now,
Has not a garland for thy brow.
True, I must leave sweet Rokeby's glades,

Nor wander more in Greta's shades;
But sure, no rigid jailer, thou
Wilt a short prison-walk allow,
Where summer flowers grow wild at will,

On Marwood-chase and Toller Hill;
Then holly green and lily gay
Shall twine in guerdon of thy lay."
The mournful youth, a space aside,
To tune Matilda's harp applied;
And then a low sad descant rung,
As prelude to the lay he sung.

XIII.

The Cypress Wreath.

O, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree!
Too lively glow the lilies light,
The varnish'd holly 's all too bright,
The May-flower and the eglantine
May shade a brow less sad than mine;

But, Lady, weave no wreath for me,

Or weave it of the cypress-tree!

Let dimpled Mirth his temples twine

With tendrils of the laughing vine;
The manly oak, the pensive yew,
To patriot and to sage be due;
The myrtle bough bids lovers live,
But that Matilda will not give;
Then, Lady, twine no wreath for me,

Or twine it of the cypress-tree!

Let merry England proudly rear
Her blended roses, bought so dear;
Let Albin bind her bonnet blue
With heath and harebell dipp'd in dew;

On favour'd Erin's crest be seen
The flower she loves of emerald green—

But, Lady, twine no wreath for me,

Or twine it of the cypress-tree.

Strike the wild harp, while maids prepare

The ivy meet for minstrel's hair;
And, while his crown of laurel-leaves,

With bloody hand the victor weaves,

Let the loud trump his triumph tell;

But, when you hear the passing-bell,
Then, Lady, twine a wreath for me,
And twine it of the cypress-tree.

Yes! twine for me the cypress bough;

But, O Matilda, twine not now!
Stay till a few brief months are past,
And have look'd and loved my last!

When villagers my shroud bestrew
With pansies, rosemary, and rue,—
Then, Lady, weave a wreath for me,
And weave it of the cypress-tree.

XIV.

O'Neale observed the starting tear,
And spoke with kind and blithesome cheer—

“No, noble Wilfrid! ere the day
When mourns the land thysilent lay,
Shall many a wreath be freely wove
By hand of friendship and of love.
I would not wish that rigid Fate
Had doom'd thee to a captive's state,
Whose hands are bound by honour's law,

Who wears a sword he must not draw;
But were it so, in minstrel pride
The land together would we ride,
On prancing steeds, like harpers old,
Bound for the halls of barons bold,
Each lover of the lyre we'd seek,
From Michael's Mount to Skiddaw's Peak,

Survey wild Albin's mountain strand,
And roam green Erin's lovely land,
While thou the gentler souls should move,
With lay of pity and of love,
And I, thy mate, in rougher strain,
Would sing of war and warriors slain.

Old England's bards were vanquish'd then,
And Scotland's vaunted Hawthornden,
And, silenced on Iernian shore,
M'Curin's harp should charm no more!”

In lively mood he spoke, to wile
From Wilfrid's wo-worn cheek a smile.

XV.

“But,” said Matilda, “ere thy name,
Good Redmond, gain its destined fame,

Say, wilt thou kindly deign to call
Thy brother-minstrel to the hall?
Bid all the household, too, attend,
Each in his rank a humble friend;
I know their faithful hearts will grieve,

When their poor Mistress takes her leave;

So let the horn and beaker flow
To mitigate their parting woe.”
The harper came;—in youth's first prime

Himself; in mode of olden time
His garb was fashion'd, to express
The ancient English minstrel's dress,
A seemly gown of Kendal green,
With gorget closed of silver sheen;
His harp in silken scarf was slung,
And by his side an anlace hung.
It seem'd some masquer's quaint array,

For revel or for holiday.

XVI.

He made obeisance with a free
Yet studied air of courtesy.
Each look and accent, framed to please,
Seem'd to affect a playful ease;
His face was of that doubtful kind,
That wins the eye, but not the mind;
Yet harsh it seem'd to deem amiss
Of brow so young and smooth as this.
His was the subtle look and sly,
That, spying all, seems nought to spy;
Round all the group his glances stole,
Unmark'd themselves, to mark the whole.

Yet sunk beneath Matilda's look,
Nor could the eye of Redmond brook.
To the suspicious, or the old,
Subtle and dangerous and bold
Had seem'd this self-invited guest;
But young our lovers,—and the rest,
Wrapt in their sorrow and their fear
At parting of their Mistress dear,

Tear-blinded to the Castle-hall,
Came as to bear her funeral pall.

XVII.

All that expression base was gone,
When waked the guest his minstrel
tone;

It fled at inspiration's call,
As erst the demon fled from Saul.
More noble glance he cast around,
More free-drawn breath inspired the
sound,

His pulse beat bolder and more high,
In all the pride of minstrelsy!
Alas! too soon that pride was o'er,
Sunk with the lay that bade it soar!
His soul resumed, with habit's chain,
Its vices wild and follies vain,
And gave the talent, with him born,
To be a common curse and scorn.
Such was the youth whom Rokeby's
Maid,

With condescending kindness, pray'd
Here to renew the strains she loved,
At distance heard and well approved.

XVIII.

Song.

THE HARP.

I was a wild and wayward boy,
My childhood scorn'd each childish
toy,
Retired from all, reserved and coy,
To musing prone,
I woo'd my solitary joy,
My Harp alone.

My youth, with bold Ambition's mood,
Despised the humble stream and wood,
Where my poor father's cottage stood,
To fame unknown;—
What should my soaring views make
good?
My Harp alone!

Love came with all his frantic fire,
And wild romance of vain desire;
The baron's daughter heard my lyre,
And praised the tone;—
What could presumptuous hope in-
spire?
My Harp alone!

At manhood's touch the bubble burst,
And manhood's pride the vision curst,
And all that had my folly nursed

Love's sway to own;
Yet spared the spell that lull'd me
first,
My Harp alone!

Woe came with war, and want with
woe;
And it was mine to undergo
Each outrage of the rebel foe:—
Can aught atone
My fields laid waste, my cot laid low?
My Harp alone!

Ambition's dreams I've seen depart,
Have rued of penury the smart,
Have felt of love the venom'd dart
When hope was flown;
Yet rests one solace to my heart,—
My Harp alone!

Then over mountain, moor, and hill,
My faithful Harp, I'll bear thee still;
And when this life of want and ail
Is wellnigh gone,
Thy strings mine elegy shall thrill,
My Harp alone!

XIX.

"A pleasing lay!" Matilda said;
But Harpool shook his old grey head,
And took his baton and his torch,
To seek his guard-room in the porch.
Edmund observed; with sudden
change,
Among the strings his fingers range,
Until they waked a bolder glee
Of military melody;
'Then paused amid the martial sound,
And look'd with well-feign'd fear
around;—
"None to this noble house belong,"
He said, "that would a Minstrel
wrong,
Whose fate has been, through good
and ill,
To love his Royal Master still;
And with your honour'd leave,
would fain
Rejoice you with a loyal strain."

Then, as assured by sign and look,
The warlike tone again he took;
And Harpool stopp'd, and turn'd to
hear

A ditty of the Cavalier.

XX.

Song.

THE CAVALIER.

While the dawn on the mountain
was misty and grey,
My true love has mounted his steed
and away
Over hill, over valley, o'er dale, and
o'er down;
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that
fights for the Crown!

He has doff'd the silk doublet the
breast-plate to bear,
He has placed the steel-cap o'er his
long flowing hair,
From his belt to his stirrup his
broadsword hangs down,—
Heaven shield the brave Gallant
that fights for the Crown!

For the rights of fair England that
broadsword he draws,
Her King is his leader, her Church
is his cause;
Her watchword is honour, his pay is
renown,—
God strike with the Gallant that
strikes for the Crown!

They may boast of their Fairfax,
their Waller, and all
The roundheaded rebels of West-
minster Hall!
But tell these bold traitors of Lon-
don's proud town,
That the spears of the North have
encircled the Crown.

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread
of their foes;
There's Erin's high Ormond, and
Scotland's Montrose!
Would you match the base Skippon,
and Massey, and Brown,
With the Barons of England, that
fight for the Crown?

Now joy to the crest of the brave
Cavalier!

Be his banner unconquer'd, resistless
his spear,
Till in peace and in triumph his toils
he may drown,
In a pledge to fair England, her
Church, and her Crown.

XXI.

"Alas!" Matilda said, "that strain,
Good harper, now is heard in vain!
The time has been, at such a sound,
When Rokeby's vassals gather'd
round,

An hundred manly hearts would
bound;

But now the stirring verse we hear,
Like trump in dying soldier's ear!
Listless and sad the notes we own,
The power to answer them is flown.
Yet not without his meet applause,
Be he that sings the rightful cause,
Even when the crisis of its fate
To human eye seems desperate.

While Rokeby's Heir such power re-
tains,

Let this slight guerdon pay thy
pains:—

And, lend thy harp; I fain would try,
If my poor skill can aught supply,
Ere yet I leave my father's hall,
To mourn the cause in which we fall."

XXII.

The harper, with a downcast look,
And trembling hand, her bounty
took.—

As yet, the conscious pride of art
Had steel'd him in his treacherous
part;

A powerful spring, of force unguess'd,
That hath each gentler mood sup-
press'd,

And reign'd in many a human breast;
From his that plans the red campaign,
To his that wastes the woodland
reign.

The falling wing, the blood-shot eye,—
The sportsman marks with apathy,
Each feeling of his victim's ill
Drown'd in his own successful skill.

The veteran, too, who now no more
Aspires to head the battle's roar,
Loves still the triumph of his art,
And traces on the pencill'd chart
Some stern invader's destined way,
Through blood and ruin, to his prey;
Patriots to death, and towns to flame,
He dooms, to raise another's name,
And shares the guilt, though not the
fame.

What pays him for his span of time
Spent in premeditating crime?
What against pity arms his heart?—
It is the conscious pride of art.

XXIII.

But principles in Edmund's mind
Were baseless, vague, and undefined.
His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
On Passion's changeful tide was
tost,

Nor Vice nor Virtue had the power
Beyond the impression of the hour;
And, O! when Passion rules, how
rare

The hours that fall to Virtue's share!
Yet now she roused her—for the pride,
That lack of sterner guilt supplied,
Could scarce support him when arose
The lay that mourned Matilda's woes.

Song.

THE FAREWELL.

The sound of Rokeby's woods I hear,
They mingle with the song:
Dark Greta's voice is in mine ear,
I must not hear them long.
From every loved and native haunt
The native Heir must stray,
And, like a ghost that sunbeams
daunt,
Must part before the day.

Soon from the halls my fathers rear'd,
Their scutcheons may descend,
A line so long beloved and fear'd
No longer here Matilda's tone
Shall bid those echoes swell;
Yet shall they hear her proudly own
The cause in which we fell.

The lady paused, and then again
Resumed the lay in loftier strain.

XXIV.

Let our halls and towers decay,
Be our name and line forgot,
Lands and manors pass away,—
We but share our Monarch's lot.
If no more our annals show
Battles won and banners taken,
Still in death, defeat, and woe,
Ours be loyalty unshaken.

Constant still in danger's hour,
Princes own'd our fathers' aid;
Lands and honours, wealth and
power,
Well their loyalty repaid.
Perish wealth, and power, and pride!
Mortal boons by mortals given;
But let constancy abide,—
Constancy's the gift of Heaven.

XXV.

While thus Matilda's lay was heard,
A thousand thoughts in Edmund
stirr'd.

In peasant life he might have known
As fair a face, as sweet a tone;
But village notes could ne'er supply
That rich and varied melody;
And ne'er in cottage-maid was seen
The easy dignity of mien,
Claiming respect, yet waving state,
That marks the daughters of the
great.

Yet not, perchance, had these alone
His scheme of purposed guilt o'er-
thrown;

But while her energy of mind
Superior rose to griefs combined,
Lending it's-kindling to her eye,
Giving her form new majesty,—
To Edmund's thought Matilda seem'd
The very object he had dream'd;
When, long ere guilt his soul had
known,

In Winston bowers he mused alone,
Taxing his fancy to combine
The face, the air, the voice divine,
Of princess fair, by cruel fate
Reft of her honours, power, and state,

Till to her rightful realm restored
By destined hero's conquering
sword.

XXVI.

"Such was my vision!" Edmund
thought;

"And have I, then, the ruin wrought
Of such a maid, that fancy ne'er
In fairest vision form'd her peer?
Was it my hand that could uncloset
The postern to her ruthless foes?
Foes lost to honour, law, and faith,
Their kindest mercy sudden death!
Have I done this? I! who have sworn,
That if the globe such angel bore,
I would have traced its circle broad,
To kiss the ground on which she
trode!—

And now—O! would that earth would
rive

And close upon me while alive!—
Is there no hope? Is all then lost?—
Bertram's already on his post!

Even now, beside the Hall's arch'd
door,

I saw his shadow cross the floor!
He was to wait my signal strain—
A little respite thus we gain:
By what I heard the menials say,
Young Wycliffe's troop are on their
way—

Alarm precipitates the crime!
My harp must wear away the time."—
And then, in accents faint and low,
He falter'd forth a tale of woe.

XXVII.

Ballad.

"And whither would you lead me
then?"

Quoth the Friar of orders grey;
And the Ruffians twain replied again,
"By a dying woman to pray."

"I see," he said, "a lovely sight,
A sight bodes little harm,
A lady as a lily bright,
With an infant on her arm."—

"Then do thine office, Friar grey,
And see thou shrive her free?"

Else shall the sprite, that parts to-
night,
Fling all his guilt on thee.

"Let mass be said, and trentals read,
When thou'rt to convent gone,
And bid the bell of St. Benedict
Toll out its deepest tone."

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
Blindfolded as he came—
Next morning, all in Littlecot Hall
Were weeping for their dame.

Wild Darrell is an alter'd man,
The village crones can tell;
He looks pale as clay, and strives to
pray,
If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell's way,
He'll beard him in his pride—
If he meet a Friar of orders grey,
He droops and turns aside.

XXVIII.

"Harper! methinks thy magic lays,"
Matilda said, "can goblins raise!
Wellnigh my fancy can discern,
Near the dark porch, a visage stern;
Ee'n now, in yonder shadowy nook,
I see it!—Redmond, Wilfrid, look!—
A human form distinct and clear—
God for thy mercy!—It draws near!"
She saw too true. Stride after stride,
The centre of that chamber wide
Fierce Bertram gain'd; then made a
stand,

And, proudly waving with his hand,
Thunder'd—Be still, upon your
lives!—

He bleeds who speaks, he dieth who
strives."

Behind their chief, the robber crew
Forth from the darken'd portal drew
In silence—save that echo dread
Return'd their heavy measured
tread.

The lamp's uncertain lustre gave
Their arms to gleam, their plumes to
wave;

File after file in order pass,
Like forms on Banquo's mystic glass.
Then, halting at their leader's sign,

At once they form'd and curv'd their
line,
Hemming within its crescent drear
Their victims, like a herd of deer.
Another sign, and to the aim
Levell'd at once their muskets came,
As waiting but their chieftain's word,
To make their fatal volley heard.

XXIX.

Back in a heap the menials drew;
Yet, even in mortal terror, true,
Their pale and startled group oppose
Between Matilda and the foes.

"O, haste thee, Wilfrid!" Redmond
cried;

"Undo that wicket by thy side!

Bear hence Matilda—gain the wood—
The pass may be awhile made good—
Thy band, ere this, must sure be
nigh—

O speak not—dally not—but fly!"

While yet the crowd their motions
hide,

Through the low wicket door they
glide.

Through vaulted passages they wind,
In Gothic intricacy twined;
Wilfrid half led, and half he bore,
Matilda to the postern-door,
And safe beneath the forest tree,
The Lady stands at liberty.

The moonbeams, the fresh gale's
caress,

Renew'd, suspended consciousness;
"Where's Redmond?" eagerly she
cries;

"Thou answer'st not—he dies! he
dies!

And thou hast left him, all bereft
Of mortal aid—with murderers left!
I know it well—he would not yield
His sword to man—his doom is
seal'd!

For my scorn'd life, which thou hast
bought

At price of his, I thank thee not."

XXX.

The unjust reproach, the angry look,
The heart of Wilfrid could not brook.
"Lady," he said, "my band so near,
In safety thou mayst rest thee here.

For Redmond's death thou shalt not
mourn,

If mine can buy his safe return."

He turn'd away—his heart throbb'd
high,

The tear was bursting from his eye;

The sense of her injustice press'd

Upon the Maid's distracted breast,—

"Stay, Wilfrid, stay! all aid is vain!"

He heard, but turn'd him not again;

He reaches now the postern-door,

Now enters—and is seen no more.

XXXI.

With all the agony that e'er

Was gender'd 'twixt suspense and
fear,

She watch'd the line of windows tall,

Whose Gothic lattice lights the Hall,

Distinguish'd by the pale red

The lamps in dim reflection shed,

While all beside in wan moonlight

Each grated casement glimmer'd
white.

No sight of harm, no sound of ill,

It is a deep and midnight still.

Who look'd upon the scene, had
guess'd

All in the Castle were at rest :

When sudden on the windows shone

A lightning flash, just seen and gone!

A shot is heard—Again the flame

Flash'd thick and fast—a volley
came!

Then echo'd wildly, from within,

Of shout and scream the mingled
din,

And weapon-crash and maddening
cry,

Of those who kill, and those who
die!—

As fill'd the Hall with sulphurous
smoke,

More red, more dark, the death-flash
broke;

And forms were on the lattice cast,

That struck, or struggled, as they
past.

XXXII.

What sounds upon the midnight
wind

Approach so rapidly behind?

It is, it is, the tramp of steeds,
Matilda hears the sound, she speeds,
Seizes upon the leader's rein—

“O, haste to aid, ere aid be vain!
Fly to the postern—gain the Hall!”
From saddle spring the troopers all;
Their gallant steeds, at liberty,
Run wild along the moonlight lea.
But, ere they burst upon the scene,
Full stubborn had the conflict been.
When Bertram mark'd Matilda's
flight,

It gave the signal for the fight;
And Rokeby's veterans, seam'd with
scars

Of Scotland's and of Erin's wars,
Their momentary panic o'er,
Stood to the arms which then they
bore;

(For they were weapon'd, and pre-
pared

Their Mistress on her way to guard.)
Then cheer'd them to the fight
O'Neale,

Then peal'd the shot, and clash'd the
steel;

The war-smoke soon with sable
breath

Darken'd the scene of blood and
death,

While on the few defenders close
The Bandits, with redoubled blows,
And, twice driven back, yet fierce
and fell

Renew the charge with frantic yell.

XXXIII.

Wilfrid has fall'n—but o'er him
stood

Young Redmond, soil'd with smoke
and blood,

Cheering his mates with heart and
hand

Still to make good their desperate
stand.

“Up, comrades, up! In Rokeby
halls

Ne'er be it said our courage falls.
What! faint ye for their savage cry,
Or do the smoke-wreaths daunt your
eye?

These rafters have return'd a shout

As loud as Rokeby's wassail rout,
As thick a smoke these hearths have
given

At Hallow-tide or Christmas-even.
Stand to it yet! renew the fight,
For Rokeby's and Matilda's right!
These slaves! they dare not, hand
to hand,

Bide buffet from a true man's
brand.”

Impetuous, active, fierce, and young,
Upon the advancing foes he sprung.
Woe to the wretch at whom is bent
His brandish'd falchion's sheer de-
scent!

Backward they scatter'd as he came,
Like wolves before the levin flame,
When, 'mid their howling conclave
driven,

Hath glanced the thunderbolt of
heaven.

Bertram rush'd on—but Harpool
clasp'd

His knees, although in death he
gasp'd,

His falling corpse before him flung,
And round the trammell'd ruffian
clung.

Just then, the soldiers fill'd the
dome,

And, shouting, charged the felons
home

So fiercely, that, in panic dread,
They broke, they yielded, fell, or
fled.

Bertram's stern voice they heed no
more,

Though heard above the battle's
roar;

While, trampling down the dying
man,

He strove, with volley'd threat and
ban,

In scorn of odds, in fate's despite,
To rally up the desperate fight.

XXXIV.

Soon murkier clouds the Hall enfold
'Than e'er from battle-thunders
roll'd;

So dense, the combatants scarce
saw

To aim or to avoid the blow.
Smothering and blindfold grows the
fight—

But soon shall dawn a dismal light!
'Mid cries, and clashing arms, there
came

The hollow sound of rushing flame;
New horrors on the tumult dire
Arise—the Castle is on fire!
Doubtful if chance had cast the
brand,

Or frantic Bertram's desperate hand.
Matilda saw—for frequent broke
From the dim casements gusts of
smoke.

Yon tower, which late so clear de-
fined

On the fair hemisphere reclined,
That, pencil'd on its azure pure,
The eye could count each embrazure,
Now, swath'd within the sweeping
cloud,

Seems giant spectre in his shroud;
Till, from each loop-hole flashing
light,

A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
And, gathering to united glare,
Streams high into the midnight air;
A dismal beacon, far and wide
That waken'd Greta's slumbering
side.

Soon all beneath, through gallery
long,
And pendant arch the fire flash'd
strong,

Snatching whatever could maintain,
Raise, or extend, its furious reign;
Startling, with closer cause of dread,
The females who the conflict fled,
And now rush'd forth upon the plain,
Filling the air with clamours vain.

XXXV.

But ceased not yet, the Hall within,
The shriek, the shout, the carnage-
din,

Till bursting lattices give proof
The flames have caught the rafter'd
roof.

What! wait they till its beams amain
Crash on the slayers and the slain?

The alarm is caught—the drawbridge
falls,

The warriors hurry from the walls,
But, by the conflagration's light,
Upon the lawn renew the fight.

Each struggling felon down was
hew'd,

Not one could gain the sheltering
wood;

But forth the affrighted harper
sprung,

And to Matilda's robe he clung.
Her shriek, entreaty, and command,
Stopp'd the pursuer's lifted hand.

Denzil and he alive were ta'en;
The rest, save Bertram, all are slain.

XXXVI.

And where is Bertram?—Soaring
high

The general flame ascends the sky;
In gather'd group the soldiers gaze
Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
When, like infernal demon, sent,
Red from his penal element,

To plague and to pollute the air,—
His face all gore, on fire his hair,
Forth from the central mass of smoke
The giant form of Bertram broke!
His brandish'd sword on high he
rears,

Then plunged among opposing
spears;

Round his left arm his mantle
truss'd,

Received and foil'd three lances'
thrust;

Nor these his headlong course with-
stood,

Like reeds he snapp'd the tough ash-
wood.

In vain his foes around him clung,
With matchless force aside he flung
Their boldest,—as the bull, at bay,
Tosses the ban-dogs from his way,
Through forty foes his path he made,
And safely gain'd the forest glade.

XXXVII.

Scarce was this final conflict o'er,
When from the postern Redmond
bore

Wilfrid, who, as of life bereft,

Had in the fatal Hall been left,
Deserted there by all his train:
But Redmond saw, and turn'd
again.—

Beneath an oak he laid him down,
That in the blaze gleam'd ruddy
brown,

And then his mantle's clasp undid;
Matilda held his drooping head,
Till, given to breathe the freer air,
Returning life repaid their care.
He gazed on them with heavy sigh,—
"I could have wish'd even thus to
die!"

No more he said—for now with speed
Each trooper had regain'd his steed;
The ready palfrey's stood array'd,
For Redmond and for Rokeby's Maid;
Two Wilfrid on his horse sustain,
One leads his charger by the rein.
But oft Matilda look'd behind,
As up the Vale of Tees they wind,
Where far the mansion of her sires
Beacon'd the dale with midnight
fires.

In gloomy arch above them spread,
The clouded heaven lower'd bloody
red;

Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
Appear'd to roll in waves of blood.
Then, one by one, was heard to fall
The tower, the donjon-keep, the hall.
Each rushing down with thunder
sound,

A space the conflagration drown'd;
Till, gathering strength, again it rose,
Announced its triumph in its close,
Shook wide its light the landscape
o'er,

Then sunk—and Rokeby was no
more!

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

THE summer sun, whose early power
Was wont to gild Matilda's bower,
And rouse her with his matin ray
Her duteous orisons to pay,—
That morning sun has three times
seen

The flowers unfold on Rokeby green,
But sees no more the slumbers fly
From fair Matilda's hazel eye;
That morning sun has three times
broke

On Rokeby's glades of elm and oak,
But, rising from their silvan screen,
Marks no grey turrets glance be-
tween.

A shapeless mass lie keep and tower,
That, hissing to the morning shower,
Can but with smouldering vapour
pay

The early smile of summer day.
The peasant, to his labour bound,
Pauses to view the blacken'd mound,
Striving, amid the ruin'd space,
Each well-remember'd spot to trace.
That length of frail and fire-scorch'd
wall

Once screen'd the hospitable hall;
When yonder broken arch was whole,
'Twas there was dealt the weekly
dole;

And where yon tottering columns
nod,

The chapel sent the hymn to God.—
So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.
The towers must share the builder's
doom;

Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb:
But better boon benignant Heaven
To Faith and Charity has given,
And bids the Christian hope sublime
Transcend the bounds of Fate and
Time.

II.

Now the third night of summer came,
Since that which witness'd Rokeby's
flame.

On Brignall cliffs and Scargill brake
The owlet's homilies awake,
The bittern scream'd from rush and
flag.

The raven slumber'd on his crag,
Forth from his den the otter drew,—
Grayling and trout their tyrant knew,
As between reed and sedge he peers,

With fierce round snout and sharp-
ened ears,
Or, prowling by the moonbeam cool,
Watches the stream or swims the
pool;—

Perch'd on his wonted eyrie high,
Sleep seal'd the tercelet's wearied eye,
That all the day had watch'd so well
The cushat dart across the dell.
In dubious beam reflected shone
That lofty cliff of pale grey stone,
Beside whose base the secret cave
To rapine late a refuge gave.
The crag's wild crest of copse and
yew

On Greta's breast dark shadows
threw;
Shadows that met or shunn'd the
sight,

With every change of fitful light;
As hope and fear alternate chase
Our course through life's uncertain
race.

III.

Gliding by crag and copsewood green,
A solitary form was seen
To trace with stealthy pace the wold,
Like fox that seeks the midnight fold,
And pauses oft, and cowers dismay'd,
At every breath that stirs the shade.
He passes now the ivy bush,—
The owl has seen him, and is hush;
He passes now the dolder'd oak,—
Ye heard the startled raven croak;
Lower and lower he descends,
Rustle the leaves, and brushwood
bends;

The otter hears him tread the shore,
And dives, and is beheld no more;
And by the cliff of pale gray stone
The midnight wanderer stands alone.
Methinks that by the moon we trace
A well-remember'd form and face!
That stripling shape, that cheek so
pale,

Combine to tell a rueful tale,
Of powers misused, of passion's force,
Of guilt, of grief, and of remorse!
'Tis Edmund's eye, at every sound
That flings that guilty glance around;
'Tis Edmund's trembling haste di-
vides

The brushwood that the cavern hides;
And, when its narrow porch lies bare,
'Tis Edmund's form that enters there.

IV.

His flint and steel have sparkled
bright,

A lamp hath lent the cavern light.
Fearful and quick his eye surveys
Each angle of the gloomy maze.
Since last he left that stern abode,
It seem'd as none its floor had trode;
Untouch'd appear'd the various spoil;
The purchase of his comrades' toil;
Masks and disguises, grim'd with
mud;

Arms broken and defiled with blood,
And all the nameless tools that aid
Night-felons in their lawless trade,
Upon the gloomy walls were hung,
Or lay in nooks obscurely flung.
Still on the sordid board appear
The relics of the noontide cheer;
Flagons and emptied flasks were there,
And bench o'erthrown, and shatter'd
chair;

And all around the semblance show'd,
As when the final revel glow'd,
When the red sun was setting fast,
And parting pledge Guy Denzil past.
"To Rokeby treasure-vaults!" they
quaff'd,
And shouted loud and wildly laugh'd,
Pour'd maddening from the rocky
door,

And parted—to return no more!
They found in Rokeby vaults their
doom,—

A bloody death, a burning tomb!

V.

There his own peasant dress he spies,
Doff'd to assume that quaint disguise;
And, shuddering, thought upon his
glee,

When prank'd in garb of minstrelsy.
"O, be the fatal art accurst,"

He cried, "that moved my folly first;
Till, bribed by bandits' base ap-
plause,

I burst through God's and Nature's
laws!

Three summer days are scantly past
 Since I have trod this cavern last,
 A thoughtless wretch, and prompt to
 err—

But, O, as yet no murderer!
 Even now I list my comrades' cheer,
 That general laugh is in mine ear,
 Which raised my pulse and steel'd
 my heart,
 As I rehearsed my treacherous part—
 And would that all since then could
 seem

The phantom of a fever's dream!
 But fatal Memory notes too well
 The horrors of the dying yell
 From my despairing mates that broke,
 When flash'd the fire and roll'd the
 smoke;

When the avengers shouting came,
 And hemm'd us 'twixt the sword and
 flame!

My frantic flight,—the lifted brand,—
 That angel's interposing hand?—
 If, for my life from slaughter freed,
 I yet could pay some grateful meed!
 Perchance this object of my quest
 May aid"—he turn'd, nor spoke the
 rest.

VI.

Due northward from the rugged
 hearth,

With paces five he metes the earth,
 Then toil'd with mattock to explore
 The entrails of the cabin floor,
 Nor paused till, deep beneath the
 ground,

His search a small steel casket found.
 Just as he stoop'd to loose its hasp,
 His shoulder felt a giant grasp;
 He started, and look'd up aghast,
 Then shriek'd!—"Twas Bertram held
 him fast.

"Fear not!" he said; but who could
 hear

That deep stern voice, and cease to
 fear.

"Fear not!—By Heaven, he shakes
 as much

As partridge in the falcon's clutch!"—
 He raised him, and unloosed his
 hold,

While from the opening casket roll'd
 A chain and reliquaire of gold.
 Bertram beheld it with surprise,
 Gazed on its fashion and device,
 Then, cheering Edmund as he could,
 Somewhat he smooth'd his rugged
 mood:

For still the youth's half-lifted eye
 Quiver'd with terror's agony,
 And sidelong glanced, as to explore,
 In meditated flight, the door.

"Sit," Bertram said, "from danger
 free:

Thou canst not, and thou shalt not,
 flee.

Chance brings me hither; hill and
 plain

I've sought for refuge-place in vain.
 And tell me now, thou aguish boy,
 What makest thou here? what means
 this toy?

Denzil and thou, I mark'd, were
 ta'en;

What lucky chance unbound your
 chain?

I deem'd, long since on Baliol's tower,
 Your heads were warp'd with sun and
 shower.

Tell me the whole—and, mark!
 nought e'er

Chafes me like falsehood, or like
 fear."

Gathering his courage to his aid,
 But trembling still, the youth obey'd.

VII.

"Denzil and I two nights passed o'er
 In fetters on the dungeon floor.

A guest the third sad morrow
 brought;

Our hold dark Oswald Wycliffe
 sought,

And eyed my comrade long askance,
 With fix'd and penetrating glance.

'Guy Denzil art thou call'd?'—'The
 same.'—

'At Court who served with wild
 Buckingham;

Thence banish'd, won a keeper's
 place,

So Villiers will'd, in Marwood-chase;
 That lost—I need not tell thee well—

Thou madest thy wit thy wants supply,

Then fought for Rokeby:—Have I guess'd
My prisoner right?—'At thy best.'—

He paused a while, and then went on
With low and confidential tone;—
Me, as I judge, not then he saw,
Close nestled in my couch of straw.—
'List to me, Guy. Thou know'st the great

Have frequent need of what they hate;

Hence, in their favour oft we see
Unscrupled, useful men like thee.
Were I disposed to bid thee live,
What pledge of faith hast thou to give?

VIII.

"The ready Fiend, who never yet
Hath failed to sharpen Denzil's wit,
Prompted his lie—'His only child
Should rest his pledge.'—The Baron
smiled,

And turn'd to me—'Thou art his son?'

I bowed—our fetters were undone,
And we were led to hear apart
A dreadful lesson of his art.
Wilfrid, he said, his heir and son,
Had fair Matilda's favour won;
And long since had their union
been,

But for her father's bigot spleen,
Whose brute and blindfold party-
rage

Would, force per force, her hand en-
gage

To a base kern of Irish earth,
Unknown his lineage and his birth,
Save that a dying ruffian bore
The infant brat to Rokeby door.

Gentle restraint, he said, would lead
Old Rokeby to enlarge his creed;
But fair occasion he must find
For such restraint well-meant and
kind,

The Knight being rendered to his
charge

But as a prisoner-at large.

IX.

"He school'd us in a well-forged
tale,

Of scheme the Castle walls to scale,
To which was leagued each Cavalier
That dwells upon the Tyne and
Wear;

That Rokeby, his parole forgot,
Had dealt with us to aid the plct.
Such was the charge, which Denzil's
zeal

Of hate to Rokeby and O'Neale
Proffer'd as witness, to make good,
Even though the forfeit were their
blood.

I scrupled, until o'er and o'er
His prisoners' safety Wycliffe swore;
And then—alas! what needs there
more?

I knew I should not live to say
The proffer I refused that day;
Ashamed to live, yet loth to die,
I soil'd me with their infamy!"—

"Poor youth," said Bertram, "waver-
ing still,

Unfit alike for good or ill!
But what fell next?"—"Soon as at
large

Was scroll'd and sign'd our fatal
charge,

There never yet, on tragic stage,
Was seen so well a painted rage
As Oswald's show'd! With loud
alarm

He call'd his garrison to arm;
From tower to tower, from post to
post,

He hurried as if all were lost;
Consign'd to dungeon and to chain
The good old Knight and all his train;
Warn'd each suspected Cavalier,
Within his limits, to appear
To-morrow, at the hour of noon,
In the high church at Egliston."—

X.

"Of Egliston!—Even now I pass'd,"
Said Bertram, "as the night closed
fast;

Torches and cressets gleam'd around,
I heard the saw and hammer sound,
And I could mark they toil'd to raise

A scaffold, hung with sable baize,
Which the grim headsman's scene
display'd,

Block, axe, and sawdust ready laid.
Some evil deed will there be done,
Unless Matilda wed his son;—

She loves him not—'tis shrewdly
guess'd

That Redmond rules the damsel's
breast.

This is a turn of Oswald's skill;
But I may meet, and foil him still!—

How camest thou to thy freedom?"—
"There

Lies mystery more dark and rare.
In midst of Wycliffe's well-feigned
rage,

A scroll was offer'd by a page,
Who told, a muffled horseman late

Had left it at the Castle-gate.

He broke the seal—his cheek show'd
change,

Sudden, portentous, wild, and strange;
The mimic passion of his eye

Was turn'd to actual agony;

His hand like summer sapling shook,
Terror and guilt were in his look.

Denzil he judged, in time of need,

Fit counsellor for evil deed;

And thus apart his counsel broke,
While with a ghastly smile he spoke:

XI.

"As in the pageants of the stage,
The dead awake in this wild age,
Mortham—whom all men deem'd de-
creed

In his own deadly snare to bleed,
Slain by a bravo, whom, o'er sea,
He train'd to aid in murdering me,—
Mortham has 'scaped! The coward
shot

The steed, but harm'd the rider not.'"
Here, with an execration fell,
Bertram leap'd up, and paced the
cell:—

"Thine own grey head, or bosom
dark,"

He mutter'd, "may be surer mark!"
Then sat, and sign'd to Edmund, pale
With terror, to resume his tale.

"Wycliffe went on:—'Mark with
what flights
Of wilder'd reverie he writes:—

The Letter.

"Ruler of Mortham's destiny!
Though dead, thy victim lives to
thee.

Once had he all that binds to life,
A lovely child, a lovelier wife;
Wealth, fame, and friendship, were
his own—

Thou gavest the word, and they are
flown.

Mark how he pays thee:—To thy
hand

He yields his honours and his land,
One boon promised;—Restore his
child!

And, from his native land exiled,
Mortham no more returns to claim
His lands, his honours, or his name;
Refuse him this, and from the slain
Thou shalt see Mortham rise again.'—

XII.

"This billet while the Baron read,
His faltering accents show'd his
dread;

He press'd his forehead with his
palm,

Then took a scornful tone and calm;
'Wild as the winds, as billows wild!

What wot I of his spouse or child?
Hither he brought a joyous dame,

Unknown her lineage or her name:
Her, in some frantic fit, he slew;

The nurse and child in fear with-
drew.

Heaven be my witness! wist I where
To find this youth, my kinsman's
heir,—

Unguerdon'd, I would give with joy
The father's arms to fold his boy,
And Mortham's lands and towers re-
sign

To the just heirs of Mortham's
line.'—

Thou know'st that scarcely e'en his
fear

Suppresses Denzil's cynic sneer;—
'Then happy is thy vassals part,'

He said, 'to ease his patron's heart !
 In thine own jailer's watchful care
 Lies Mortham's just and rightful
 heir;
 Thy generous wish is fully won,—
 Redmond O'Neale is Mortham's
 son.'

XIII.

“Up starting with a frenzied look,
 His clenched hand the Baron shook:
 'Is Hell at work? or dost thou rave,
 Or darest thou palter with me, slave !
 Perchance thou wot'st not, Barnard's
 towers

Have racks, of strange and ghastly
 powers.'

Denzil, who well his safety knew,
 Firmly rejoin'd, 'I tell thee true.
 Thy racks could give thee but to
 know

The proofs, which I, untortured,
 show.—

It chanced upon a winter night,
 When early snow made Stanmore
 white,

That very night, when first of all
 Redmond O'Neale saw Rokeby Hall,
 It was my goodly lot to gain
 A reliquary and a chain,
 Twisted and chased of massive gold.
 —Demand not how the prize I hold !
 It was not given, nor lent, nor
 sold.—

Gilt tablets to the chain were hung,
 With letters in the Irish tongue.
 I hid my spoil, for there was need
 That I should leave the land with
 speed;

Nor then I deem'd it safe to bear
 On mine own person gems so rare.
 Small heed I of the tablets took,
 But since have spell'd them by the
 book,

When some sojourn in Erin's land
 Of their wild speech had given com-
 mand,
 But darkling was the sense; the
 phrase

And language those of other days,
 Involved of purpose, as to foil
 An interloper's prying toil.

The words, but not the sense, I
 knew,
 Till fortune gave the guiding clue.

XIV.

“ ‘Three days since, was that clue
 reveal'd,

In Thorsgill as I lay conceal'd,
 And heard at full when Rokeby's
 Maid

Her uncle's history display'd;
 And now I can interpret well
 Each syllable the tablets tell.
 Mark, then : Fair Edith was the joy
 Of old O'Neale of Clandeboy;

But from her sire and country fled,
 In secret Mortham's Lord to wed.
 O'Neale, his first resentment o'er,
 Despatch'd his son to Greta's shore,
 Enjoining he should make him
 known

(Until his farther will were shown)
 To Edith, but to her alone.

What of their ill-starr'd meeting fell
 Lord Wycliffe knows, and none so
 well.

XV.

“ ‘O'Neale it was, who, in despair,
 Robb'd Mortham of his infant heir;
 He bred him in their nurture wild,
 And call'd him murder'd Connel's
 child.

Soon died the nurse; the Clan be-
 lieved

What from their Chieftain they re-
 ceived.

His purpose was that ne'er again
 The boy should cross the Irish main;
 But, like his mountain sires, enjoy
 The woods and wastes of Clandeboy.
 Then on the land wild troubles came,
 And stronger Chieftains urged a
 claim,

And wrested from the old man's
 hands

His native towers, his father's lands.
 Unable then, amid the strife,
 To guard young Redmond's rights or
 life,

Late and reluctant he restores
 The infant to his native shores,

With goodly gifts and letters stored,
 With many a deep conjuring word,
 To Mortham and to Rokeby's Lord.
 Nought knew the clod of Irish earth,
 Who was the guide, of Redmond's
 birth;
 But deem'd his Chief's commands
 were laid
 On both, by both to be obey'd.
 How he was wounded by the way,
 I need not, and I list not say.'—

XVI.

“A wondrous tale! and, grant it true,
 What,’ Wycliffe answer'd, ‘might I do?

Heaven knows, as willingly as now
 I raise the bonnet from my brow,
 Would I my kinsman's manors fair
 Restore to Mortham, or his heir;
 But Mortham is distraught—O'Neale
 Has drawn for tyranny his steel,
 Malignant to our rightful cause,
 And train'd in Rome's delusive laws.
 Hark thee apart!—They whisper'd
 long,
 Till Denzil's voice grew bold and
 strong;—

‘My proofs! I never will,’ he said,
 ‘Show mortal man where they are
 laid.

Nor hope discovery to foreclose,
 By giving me to feed the crows;
 For I have mates at large, who know
 Where I am wont such toys to stow.
 Free me from peril and from band,
 These tablets are at thy command:
 Nor were it hard to form some train,
 To wile old Mortham o'er the main.
 Then, lunatic's nor papist's hand
 Should wrest from thine the goodly
 land.’—

—‘I like thy wit,’ said Wycliffe,
 ‘well;

But here in hostage shalt thou dwell.
 Thy son, unless my purpose err,
 May prove the trustier messenger.
 A scroll to Mortham shall he bear
 From me, and fetch these tokens
 rare.

Gold shalt thou have, and that good
 store,
 And freedom, his commission o'er;
 But if his faith should chance to fail,
 The gibbet frees thee from the jail.’—

XVII.

“Mesh'd in the net himself had
 twined,
 What subterfuge could Denzil find?
 He told me, with reluctant sigh,
 That hidden here the tokens lie;
 Conjured my swift return and aid,
 By all he scoff'd and disobey'd,
 And look'd as if the noose were tied,
 And I the priest who left his side.
 This scroll from Mortham Wycliffe
 gave,

Whom I must seek by Greta's wave;
 Or in the hut where chief he hides,
 Where Thorsgill's forester resides.
 (Then chanced it, wandering in the
 glade,
 That he descried our ambushade.)
 I was dismiss'd as evening fell,
 And reach'd but now this rocky
 cell.”—

“Give Oswald's letter.”—Bertram
 read,

And tore it fiercely shred by shred:—
 “All lies and villany! to blind
 His noble kinsman's generous mind,
 And train him on from day to day,
 Till he can take his life away.—
 And now, declare thy purpose, youth,
 Nor dare to answer, save the truth;
 If aught I mark of Denzil's art,
 I'll tear the secret from thy heart!”—

XVIII.

“It needs not. I renounce,” he said,
 “My tutor and his deadly trade.
 Fix'd was my purpose to declare
 To Mortham, Redmond is his heir;
 To tell him in what risk he stands,
 And yield these tokens to his hands.
 Fix'd was my purpose to atone,
 Far as I may, the evil done;
 And fix'd it rests—if I survive
 This night, and leave this cave alive.”
 “And Denzil?”—“Let them ply the
 rack

Even till his joints and sinews crack!
 If Oswald tear him limb from limb,
 What ruth can Denzil claim from
 him,
 Whose thoughtless youth he led
 astray,
 And damn'd to this unhallow'd way?
 He school'd me faith and vows were
 vain;
 Now let my master reap his gain."—
 "True," answer'd Bertram, "'tis his
 need;
 There's retribution in the deed.
 But thou—thou art not for our
 course,
 Hast fear, hast pity, hast remorse:
 And he with us the gale who braves,
 Must heave such cargo to the waves,
 Or lag with overloaded prore,
 While barks unburden'd reach the
 shore."

XIX.

He paused, and, stretching him at
 length,
 Seem'd to repose his bulky strength.
 Communing with his secret mind,
 As half he sat, and half reclined,
 One ample hand his forehead press'd,
 And one was dropp'd across his
 breast.

The shaggy eyebrows deeper came
 Above his eyes of swarthy flame;
 His lip of pride a while forbore
 The haughty curve till then it wore;
 The unaltered fierceness of his look
 A shade of darken'd sadness took,—
 For dark and sad a presage press'd,
 Resistlessly on Bertram's breast,—
 And when he spoke, his wonted tone,
 So fierce, abrupt, and brief was gone.
 His voice was steady, low, and deep,
 Like distant waves, when breezes
 sleep;
 And sorrow mix'd with Edmund's
 fear,
 Its low unbroken depth to hear.

XX.

"Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
 The woe that warp'd my patron's
 mind:

'Twould wake the fountains of the
 eye

In other men, but mine are dry.
 Mortham must never see the fool,
 That sold himself base Wycliffe's
 tool;

Yet less from thirst of sordid gain,
 Than to avènge supposed disdain.
 Say, Bertram rues his fault;—a word,
 Till now, from Bertram never heard:
 Say, too, that Mortham's Lord he
 prays

To think but on their former days;
 On Quariana's beach and rock,
 On Cayo's bursting battle-shock,
 On Darien's sands and deadly dew,
 And on the dart Tlatzecca threw;—
 Perchance my patron yet may hear
 More that may grace his comrade's
 bier.

My soul hath felt a secret weight,
 A warning of approaching fate;
 A priest had said, 'Return, repent!
 As well to bid that rock be rent.
 Firm as that flint I face mine end;
 My heart may burst, but cannot
 bend.

XXI.

"The dawning of my youth, with
 awe

And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw;
 For over Redesdale it came,
 As bodeful as their beacon-flame.
 Edmund, thy years were scarcely
 mine,

When, challenging the Clans of
 Tyne,

To bring their best my brand to
 prove,

O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove;
 But Tynedale, nor in tower nor
 town,

Held champion meet to take it down.
 My noontide, India may declare;

Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
 Like him, to wood and cave bade
 fly

Her natives, from mine angry eye.
 Panama's maids shall long look pale

When Risingham inspires the tale;
 Chili's dark matrons long shall tame

The froward child with Bertram's name.

And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night.

XXII.

“Now to thy mission, Edmund. Fly,
Seek Mortham out, and bid him hie
To Richmond, where his troops are laid,

And lead his force to Redmond's aid.
Say, till he reaches Egliston,
A friend will watch to guard his son.
Now, fare-thee-well; for night draws on,

And I would rest me here alone.”
Despite his ill dissembled fear,
There swam in Edmund's eye a tear;
A tribute to the courage high,
Which stoop'd not in extremity,
But strove, irregularly great,
To triumph o'er approaching fate!
Bertram beheld the dewdrop start,
It almost touch'd his iron heart:—

“I did not think there lived,” he said,
“One, who would tear for Bertram shed.”

He loosen'd then his baldric's hold,
A buckle broad of massive gold;—
“Of all the spoil that paid his pains,
But this with Risingham remains;
And this, dear Edmund, thou shalt take,

And wear it long for Bertram's sake.
Once more—to Mortham speed amain;
Farewell! and turn thee not again.”

XXIII.

The night has yielded to the morn,
And far the hours of prime are worn.
Oswald, who, since the dawn of day,
Had cursed his messenger's delay,
Impatient question'd now his train,

“Was Denzil's son return'd again?”
It chanced there answer'd of the crew,

A menial, who young Edmund knew:
“No son of Denzil this,”—he said;
“A peasant boy from Winston glade,
For song and minstrelsy renown'd,
And knavish pranks, the hamlets round.”—

“Not Denzil's son!—from Winston vale!—

Then it was false, that specious tale:
Or, worse—he hath despatch'd the youth

To show to Mortham's Lord its truth.
Fool that I was!—but 'tis too late:—
This is the very turn of fate!—

The tale, or true or false, relies
On Denzil's evidence!—He dies!
Ho! Provost Marshal! instantly
Lead Denzil to the gallows-tree!
Allow him not a parting word;
Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!
Then let his gory head appal
Marauders from the Castle-wall.
Lead forth thy guard, that duty done,
With best dispatch to Egliston.—
—Basil, tell Wilfrid he must straight
Attend me at the Castle-gate.”

XXIV.

“Alas!” the old domestic said,
And shook his venerable head,
“Alas, my lord! full ill to-day
May my young master brook the way!
The leech has spoke with grave alarm,

Of unseen hurt, of secret harm,
Of sorrow lurking at the heart,
That mars and lets his healing art.”—

“Tush, tell not me!—Romantic boys
Pine themselves sick for airy toys,
I will find cure for Wilfrid soon;
Bid him for Egliston be boune,
And quick!—I hear the dull death-drum

Tell Denzil's hour of fate is come.”
He paused with scornful smile, and then

Resumed his train of thought agen.
“Now comes my fortune's crisis near!

Entreaty boots not—instant fear,
 Naught else, can bend Matilda's
 pride,
 Or win her to be Wilfrid's bride.
 But when she sees the scaffold
 placed,
 With axe and block and headsman
 graced,
 And when she deems, that to deny
 Dooms Redmond and her sire to die,
 She must give way.—Then, were the
 line
 Of Rokeby once combined with mine,
 I gain the weather-gage of fate!
 If Mortham come, he comes too late,
 While I, allied thus and prepared,
 Bid him defiance to his beard.—
 —If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
 To drop the axe!—Soft! pause we
 there.
 Mortham still lives—yon youth may
 tell
 His tale—and Fairfax loves him
 well;—
 Else, wherefore should I now delay
 To sweep this Redmond from my
 way?
 But she to piety perforce
 Must yield—Without there! sound
 to horse."

XXV.

'Twas bustle in the court below, —
 "Mount, and march forward!"—
 Forth they go;
 Steeds neigh and trample all around,
 Steel rings, spears glimmer, trumpets
 sound.—
 Just then was sung his parting hymn;
 And Denzil turn'd his eyeballs dim,
 And, scarcely conscious what he sees,
 Follows the horsemen down the
 Tees;
 And scarcely conscious what he
 hears,
 The trumpets tingle in his ears.
 O'er the long bridge they're sweep-
 ing now,
 The van is hid by greenwood bough;
 But ere the rearward had passed o'er,
 Guy Denzil heard and saw no more!
 One stroke, upon the Castle bell,
 To Oswald rung his dying knell,

XXVI.

O, for that pencil, erst profuse
 Of chivalry's emblazon'd hues,
 That traced of old, in Woodstock
 bower,
 The pageant of the Leaf and Flower,
 And bodied forth the tourney high,
 Held for the hand of Emily!
 Then might I paint the tumult loud,
 That to the crowded abbey flow'd,
 And pour'd, as with an ocean's sound,
 Into the church's ample bound!
 Then might I show each varying
 mein,
 Exulting, woeful, or serene;
 Indifference, with his idiot stare,
 And Sympathy, with anxious air;
 Paint the dejected Cavalier,
 Doubtful, disarm'd, and sad of cheer;
 And his proud foe, whose formal eye
 Claim'd conquest now and mastery;
 And the brute crowd, whose envious
 zeal
 Huzzas each turn of Fortune's wheel,
 And loudest shouts when lowest lie
 Exalted worth and station high.
 Yet what may such a wish avail?
 'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
 Hurrying, as best I can, along,
 The hearers and the hasty song;—
 Like traveller when approaching
 home,
 Who sees the shades of evening come,
 And must not now his course delay,
 Or choose the fair, but winding way;
 Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
 Where o'er his head the wildings
 bend,
 To bless the breeze that cools his
 brow,
 Or snatch a blossom from the bough.

XXVII.

The reverend pile lay wild and waste,
 Profaned, dishonour'd, and defaced.
 Through storied lattices no more
 In soften'd light the sunbeams pour,
 Gilding the Gothic sculpture rich
 Of shrine, and monument, and niche.
 The Civil fury of the time
 Made sport of sacrilegious crime;
 For dark Fanaticism rent

Altar, and screen, and ornament,
And peasant hands the tombs o'er-
threw

Of Bowes, of Rokeby, and Fitz-Hugh.
And now was seen, unwonted sight,
In holy walls a scaffold dight;

Where once the priest, of grace di-
vine

Dealt to his flock the mystic sign,
There stood the block display'd, and
there

The headsman grim his hatchet bare,
And for the word of Hope and Faith,
Resounded loud a doom of death.

Thrice the fierce trumpet's breath was
heard,

And echo'd thrice the herald's word,
Dooming, for breech of martial laws,
And treason to the Commons' cause,
The Knight of Rokeby and O'Neale
To stoop their heads to block and
steel.

The trumpets flourish'd high and
shrill,

Then was a silence dead and still;
And silent prayers to heaven were
cast,

And stifled sobs were bursting fast,
Till from the crowd begun to rise
Murmurs of sorrow or surprise,

And from the distant aisles there
came

Deep-mutter'd threats, with Wy-
cliffe's name.

XXVIII.

But Oswald, guarded by his band,
Powerful in evil, waved his hand,
And bade Sedition's voice be dead,
On peril of the murmurer's head.
Then first his glance sought Roke-
by's Knight;

Who gazed on the tremendous sight,
As calm as if he came a guest
To kindred Baron's feudal feast,

As calm as if that trumpet-call
Were summons to the banner'd hall;
Firm in his loyalty he stood,
And prompt to seal it with his
blood.

With downcast look drew Oswald
nigh,—

He durst not cope with Rokeby's
eye!—

And said, with low and faltering
breath,

“Thou know'st the terms of life and
death.”

The Knight then turn'd, and sternly
smiled;

“The maiden is mine only child,
Yet shall my blessing leave her head,
If with a traitor's son she wed.”

Then Redmond spoke: “the life of
one

Might thy malignity atone,
On me be flung a double guilt!
Spare Rokeby's blood, let mine be
spilt!”

Wycliffe had listen'd to his suit,
But dread prevail'd, and he was mute.

XXIX.

And now he pours his choice of fear
In secret on Matilda's ear;

“An union form'd with me and mine,
Ensures the faith of Rokeby's line.
Consent, and all this dread array,
Like morning dream, shall pass away;
Refuse, and, by my duty press'd,
I give the word—thou know'st the
rest.”

Matilda, still and motionless,
With terror heard the dread address,
Pale as the sheeted maid who dies
To hopeless love a sacrifice;

Then wrung her hands in agony,
And round her cast bewilder'd eye.
Now on the scaffold glanced, and
now

On Wycliffe's unrelenting brow.
She veil'd her face, and, with a voice
Scarce audible,—“I make my choice!
Spare but their lives!—for aught
beside,

Let Wilfrid's doom my fate decide.
He once was generous!”—As she
spoke,

Dark Wycliffe's joy in triumph
broke:—

“Wilfrid, where loiter'd ye so late?
Why upon Basil rest thy weight?—
Art spell-bound by enchanter's
wand?—

Kneel, kneel, and take her yielded
hand;
Thank her with raptures, simple boy!
Should tears and trembling speak thy
joy?"—
"O hush, my sire! To prayer and
tear
Of mine thou hast refused thine ear;
But now the awful hour draws on,
When truth must speak in loftier
tone."

XXX.

He took Matilda's hand: "Dear maid,
Couldst thou so injure me," he said,
"Of thy poor friend so basely deem,
As blend with him this barbarous
scheme?
Alas! my efforts made in vain,
Might well have saved this added
pain.
But now, bear witness earth and
heaven,
That ne'er was hope to mortal given,
So twisted with the strings of life,
As this—to call Matilda wife!
I bid it now for ever part,
And with the effort bursts my heart!"
His feeble frame was worn so low,
With wounds, with watching, and
with woe,
That nature could no more sustain
The agony of mental pain.
He kneel'd—his lip her hand had
press'd,—
Just then he felt the stern arrest.
Lower and lower sunk his head,—
They raised him,—but the life was
fled!
Then, first alarm'd, his sire and
train
Tried every aid, but tried in vain.
The soul, too soft its ills to bear,
Had left our mortal hemisphere,
And sought in better world the meed,
To blameless life by Heaven decreed.

XXXI.

The wretched sire beheld, aghast,
With Wilfrid all his projects past,
All turn'd and centred on his son,
On Wilfrid all—and he was gone.
"And I am childless now," he said,

'Childless, through that relentless
maid!

A lifetime's arts, in vain essay'd,
Are bursting on their artist's head!
Here lies my Wilfrid dead—and
there

Comes hated Mortham for his heir,
Eager to knit in happy band
With Rokeby's heiress Redmond's
hand.

And shall their triumph soar o'er all
The schemes deep-laid to work their
fall?

No!—deeds, which prudence might
not dare,

Appal not vengeance and despair.
The murd'ress weeps upon his bier—
I'll change to real that feigned tear!
They all shall share destruction's
shock;—

Ho! lead the captives to the block!"—
But ill his Provost could divine
His feelings, and forbore the sign.

"Slave! to the block!—or I, or they,
Shall face the judgment-seat this
day!"

XXXII.

The outmost crowd have heard a
sound,

Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground:
Nearer it came, and yet more near,—
The very death's-men paused to hear.
'Tis in the churchyard now—the
tread

Hath waked the dwelling of the dead!
Fresh sod, and old sepulchral stone,
Return the tramp in varied tone.

All eyes upon the gateway hung,
When through the Gothic arch there
sprung

A horseman arm'd, at headlong
speed—

Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed.
Fire from the flinty floor was spurn'd,
The vaults unwonted clang re-
turn'd!—

One instant's glance around he threw,
From saddlebow his pistol drew.

Grimly determined was his look!
His charger with his spurs he strook—
All scatter'd backward as he came,

For all knew Bertram Risingham!
 Three bounds that noble courser
 gave;
 The first had reach'd the central nave,
 The second clear'd the chancel wide,
 The third—he was at Wycliffe's side.
 Full levell'd at the Baron's head,
 Rang the report—the bullet sped—
 And to his long account, and last,
 Without a groan dark Oswald passed!
 All was so quick that it might seem
 A flash of lightning, or a dream.

XXXIII.

While yet the smoke the deed conceals,
 Bertram his ready charger wheels;
 But flounder'd on the pavement-floor
 The steed, and down the rider bore,
 And, bursting in the headlong sway,
 The faithless saddle-girths gave way.
 'Twas while he toil'd him to be freed,
 And with the rein to raise the steed,
 That from amazement's iron trance
 All Wycliffe's soldiers waked at once.
 Sword, halbert, musket-butt, their
 blows
 Hail'd upon Bertram as he rose;
 A score of pikes, with each a wound,
 Bore down and pinn'd him to the
 ground;
 But still his struggling force he rears,
 'Gainst hacking brands and stabbing
 spears;
 Thrice from assailants shook him free,
 Once gain'd his feet, and twice his
 knee.
 By tenfold odds oppress'd at length,
 Despite his struggles and his strength,
 He took a hundred mortal wounds,
 As mute as fox 'mongst mangling
 hounds;
 And when he died, his parting groan
 Had more of laughter than of moan!
 —They gazed, as when a lion dies,
 And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
 But bend their weapons on the slain,
 Lest the grim kings should rouse again!
 Then blow and insult some renew'd,
 And from the trunk, the head had
 hew'd,

But Basil's voice the deed forbade;
 A mantle o'er the corse he laid:—
 “Fell as he was in act and mind,
 He left no bolder heart behind:
 Then give him, for a soldier's meet,
 A soldier's cloak for winding sheet.”

XXXIV.

No more of death and dying pang,
 No more of trump and bugle clang,
 Though through the sounding woods
 there come
 Banner and bugle, trump and drum.
 Arm'd with such powers as well had
 freed
 Young Redmond at his utmost need,
 And back'd with such a band of horse,
 As might less ample powers enforce;
 Possess'd of every proof and sign
 That gave an heir to Mortham's line,
 And yielded to a father's arms
 An image of his Edith's charms,—
 Mortham is come, to hear and see
 Of this strange morn the history.
 What saw he?—not the church's
 floor,
 Cumber'd with dead and stain'd with
 gore;
 What heard he?—not the clamorous
 crowd,
 That shout their gratulations loud:
 Redmond he saw and heard alone,
 Clasp'd him, and sobb'd, “My son!
 my son!”—

XXXV.

This chanced upon a summer morn,
 When yellow waved the heavy corn:
 But when brown August o'er the land
 Call'd forth the reaper's busy band,
 A gladsome sight the silvan road
 From Egliston to Mortham show'd.
 A while the hardy rustic leaves
 The task to bind and pile the sheaves,
 And maids their sickles fling aside,
 To gaze on bridegroom and on bride,
 And childhood's wondering group
 draws near,
 And from the gleaner's hands the ear
 Drops, while she folds them for a
 payer.

And blessing on the lovely pair.
 'Twas then the Maid of Rokeby gave
 Her plighted truth to Redmond brave;
 And Teesdale can remember yet
 How Fate to Virtue paid her debt,
 And, for their troubles, bade them
 prove

A lengthen'd life of peace and love.

Time and tide had thus their sway,
 Yielding, like an April day,
 Smiling noon for sullen morrow,
 Years of joy for hours of sorrow!

THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMALN.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

COME, LUCY! while 'tis morning hour,
 The woodland brook we needs must
 pass;

So, ere the sun assume his power,
 We shelter in our poplar bower,
 Where dew lies long upon the flower,
 Though vanish'd from the velvet
 grass.

Curbing the stream, this stony ridge
 May serve us for a silvan bridge;

For here compell'd to disunite,
 Round petty isles the runnels
 glide,

And chafing off their puny spite,
 The shallow murmurers waste their
 might,

Yielding to footstep free and light
 A dry-shod pass from side to
 side.

II.

Nay, why this hesitating pause?
 And, Lucy, as thy step withdraws,
 Why sidelong eye the streamlet's
 brim?

Titania's foot without a slip,
 Like thine, though timid, light, and
 slim,

From stone to stone might safely
 trip,

Nor risk the glow-worm clasp to
 dip

That binds her slipper's silken rim.
 Or trust thy lover's strength: nor fear

That this same stalwart arm of
 mine,

Which could yon oak's prone trunk
 uprear,

Shall shrink beneath the burden dear
 Of form so slender, light, and
 fine—

So,—now, the danger dared at last,
 Look back, and smile at perils past!

III.

And now we reach the favourite
 glade,

Paled in by copsewood, cliff, and
 stone,

Where, never harsher sounds invade,
 To break affection's whispering
 tone,

Than the deep breeze that wags the
 shade,

Than the small brooklet's feeble
 moan.

Come! rest thee on thy wonted seat;
 Moss'd is the stone. the turf is
 green,

A place where lovers best may meet,
 Who would that not their love be
 seen.

The boughs, that dim the summer
 sky,

Shall hide us from each lurking spy,
 That fain would spread the invidi-
 ous tale,

How Lucy of the lofty eye,
 Noble in birth, in fortunes high,

She for whom lords and barons sigh,
 Meets her poor Arthur in the dale.

IV.

How deep that blush!—how deep
 that sigh!

And why does Lucy shun mine eye?

Is it because that crimson draws
Its colour from some secret cause,
Some hidden movement of the breast,
She would not that her Arthur
guess'd!

O! quicker far is lover's ken
Than the dull glance of common men,
And, by strange sympathy, can spell
The thoughts the loved one will not
tell!

And mine, in Lucy's blush, saw met
The hues of pleasure and regret;
Pride mingled in the sigh her voice,
And shared with Love the crim-
son glow;

Well pleased that thou art Arthur's
choice,
Yet shamed thine own is placed
so low:

Thou turn'st thy self-confessing
cheek,

As if to meet the breeze's cooling;
Then, Lucy, hear thy tutor speak,
For Love, too, has his hours of
schooling.

V.

Too oft my anxious eye has spied
That secret grief thou fain wouldst
hide,

The passing pang of humbled pride;
Too oft, when through the splen-
did hall,

The load-star of each heart and
eye,

My fair one leads the glittering ball,
Will her stol'n glance on Arthur fall,
With such a blush and such a
sigh!

Thou would'st not yield, for wealth
or rank,

The heart thy worth and beauty
won,

Nor leave me on this mossy bank,
To meet a rival on a throne:

Why, then, should vain repinings
rise,

That to thy lover fate denies

A nobler name, a wide domain,

A Baron's birth, a menial train,

Since Heaven assign'd him, for
his part,

A lyre, a falchion, and a heart?

VI.

My sword—its master must be
dumb;

But, when a soldier names my
name,

Approach, my Lucy! fearless come,
Nor dread to hear of Arthur's
shame.

My heart—'mid all yon courtly
crew,

Of lordly rank and lofty line,
Is there to love and honour true,
That boasts a pulse so warm as
mine?

They praised thy diamonds' lustre
rare—

Match'd with thine eyes, I thought
it faded;

They praised the pearls that bound
thy hair—

I only saw the locks they braided;
They talk'd of wealthy dower and
land,

And titles of high birth the token—
I thought of Lucy's heart and hand,
Nor knew the sense of what was
spoken.

And yet, if rank'd in Fortune's roll,
I might have learn'd their choice
unwise,

Who rate the dower above the soul,
And Lucy's diamonds o'er her eyes.

VII.

My lyre—it is an idle toy,

That borrows accents not its own,
Like warbler of Colombian sky,

That sings but in a mimic tone.*
Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,
Nor boasts it aught of Border spell;

Its strings no feudal slogan pour,
Its heroes draw no broad claymore;

No shouting clans applauses raise,
Because it sung their father's praise;

On Scottish moor, or English down,
It ne'er was graced by fair renown;

Nor won,—best meed to minstrel
true,—

One favouring smile from fair BUC-
CLEUCH!

* The Mocking Bird.

By one poor streamlet sounds its
tone,
And heard by one dear maid alone.

VIII.

But, if thou bid'st, these tones shall
tell
Of errant knight, and damozelle;
Of the dread knot a Wizard tied,
In punishment of maiden's pride,
In notes of marvel and of fear,
That best may charm romantic ear.
For Lucy loves,—likes COLLINS, ill-
starred name!

Whose lay's requital was that tardy
fame,

Who bound no laurel round his living
head,

Should hang it o'er his monument
when dead,—

For Lucy loves to tread enchanted
strand,

And thread, like him, the maze of
fairy land;

Of golden battlements to view the
gleam,

And slumber soft by some Elysian
stream;

Such lay she loves,—and, such my
Lucy's choice,

What other song can claim her Poet's
voice?

CANTO FIRST.

I.

WHERE is the Maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of
Triermain?

She must be lovely, and constant,
and kind,

Holy and pure, and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer, and gentle of mood,
Courteous, and generous, and noble
of blood—

Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an
April day;

Constant and true as the widow'd
dove,

Kind as a minstrel that sings of love;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,

Where never sunbeam kiss'd the
wave;

Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers
and dies,

Yet blithe as the light leaves that
dance in its sighs;

Courteous as monarch the morn he
is crown'd,

Generous as spring-dews that bless
the glad ground;

Noble her blood as the currents that
met

In the veins of the noblest Plantage-
net—

Such must her form be, her mood,
and her strain,

That shall match with Sir Roland of
Triermain.

II. .

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him
to sleep,

His blood it was fever'd, his breathing
was deep.

He had been pricking against the
Scot,

The foray was long, and the skir-
mish hot;

His dinted helm and his buckler's
plight

Bore token of a stubborn fight.

All in the castle must hold them
still,

Harpers must lull him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the
best,

Till sleep sink down upon his breast,
Like the dew on a summer hill.

III.

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-
fog grey,

That like a silvery cape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant
head,

And faintly gleam'd each painted
pane

Of the lordly halls of Triermain,
When that Baron bold awoke.

Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and
hall,
While hastily he spoke.

IV.

“Hearken, my minstrels! Which of
ye all
Touch’d his harp with that dying
fall,
So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem’d an angel’s whisper’d call
To an expiring saint?
And hearken, my merry-men! What
time or where
Did she pass, that maid with her
heavenly brow,
With her look so sweet and her eyes
so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel
air,
And the eagle plume in her dark-
brown hair,
That pass’d from my bower e’en
now?”

V.

Answer’d him Richard de Bretville;
he
Was chief of the Baron’s minstrel-
sy,—
“Silent, noble chieftain, we
Have sat since midnight close,
When such lulling sounds as the
brooklet sings,
Murmur’d from our melting strings,
And hush’d you to repose.
Had a harp-note sounded here,
It had caught my watchful ear,
Although it fell as faint and shy
As bashful maiden’s half-form’d
sigh,
When she thinks her lover near.”—
Answer’d Philip of Fastwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer hall,—
“Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross’d;
Else had I heard the steps,
though low
And light they fell, as when earth
receives,

In morn of frost, the wither’d leaves,
That drop when no winds
blow.”—

VI.

“Then come thou hither, Henry,
my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Her-
mitage,
When that dark castle, tower, and
spire
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,
And reddend’d all the Nine-stane
Hill,
And the shrieks of death that wildly
broke
Through devouring flame and smoth-
ering smoke,
Made the warrior’s heart-blood
chill.
The trustiest thou of all my train,
My fleetest courser thou must rein,
And ride to Lyulph’s tower,
And from the Baron of Triermaln
Greet well that sage of power.
He is sprung from Druid sires,
And British bards that tuned their
lyres
To Arthur and Pendragon’s praise,
And his who sleeps at Dunmail-
raise.*
Gifted like his gifted race,
He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Helvellyn’s cliffs sublime;
Sign and sigil well doth he know
And can bode of weal and woe,
Of kingdoms’ fall, and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of
stars.
He shall tell if middle earth
To that enchanting shape gave birth,
Or if ’twas but an airy thing,
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
Framed from the rainbow’s varying
dyes,
Or fading tints of western skies.
For, by the Blessed Rood I swear,

* Dunmailraise is one of the grand passes from Cumberland into Westmoreland. There is a cairn on it said to be the monument of Dunmail, the last King of Cumberland.

If that fair form breathe vital air,
No other maiden by my side
Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!"

VII.

The faithful Page he mounts his
steed,
And soon he cross'd green Irthing's
mead,
Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant
plain,
And Eden barr'd his course in vain.
He pass'd red Penrith's Table
Round,
For feats of chivalry renown'd,
Left Mayburgh's mound and stones
of power,
By Druids raised in magic hour,
And traced the Eamont's winding
way,
Till Ulfo's* lake beneath him lay.

VIII.

Onward he rode, the pathway still
Winding betwixt the lake and hill;
Till, on the fragment of a rock,
Struck from its base by lightning
shock,
He saw the hoary Sage :
The silver moss and lichen twined,
With fern and deer-hair check'd and
lined,
A cushion fit for age;
And o'er him shook the aspin-tree, •
A restless rustling canopy.
Then sprung young Henry from his
selle,
And greeted Lylph grave,
And then his master's tale did tell,
And then for counsel crave.
The Man of Years mused long and
deep,
Of time's lost treasures taking keep,
And then, as rousing from a sleep,
His solemn answer gave.

IX.

"That maid is born of middle earth,
And may of man be won,
Though there have glided since her
birth

Five hundred years and one.
But where's the Knight in all the
north,
That dare the adventure follow forth,
So perilous to knightly worth,
In the valley of St. John?
Listen, youth, to what I tell,
And bind it on thy memory well ;
Nor muse that I commence the rhyme
Far distant 'mid the wrecks of time.
The mystic tale, by bard and sage,
Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X.

Lylph's Tale.

"KING ARTHUR has ridden from mer-
ry Carlisle
When Pentecost was o'er:
He journey'd like errant-knight the
while,
And sweetly the summer sun did
smile
On mountain, moss, and moor.
Above his solitary track
Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,
Amid whose yawning gulfs the sun
Cast amber'd radiance red and dun,
Though never sunbeam could discern
The surface of that sable tarn,
In whose black mirror you may spy
The stars, while noontide lights the
sky.
The gallant King he skirted still
The margin of that mighty hiil ;
Rock upon rocks incumbent hung,
And torrents, down the gullies flung,
Join'd the rude river that brawl'd on,
Recoiling now from crag and stone,
Now diving deep from human ken,
And raving down its darksome glen.
The Monarch judged this desert
wild,
With such romantic ruin piled,
Was theatre by Nature's hand
For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI.

"O rather he chose, that Monarch
bold,
On vent'rous quest to ride,
In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth
of gold,

* Ulswater.

In princely bower to bide;
 The bursting crash of a foeman's
 spear
 As it shiver'd against his mail,
 Was merrier music to his ear
 Than courtier's whisper'd tale:
 And the clash of Caliburn* more dear,
 When on the hostile casque it rung,
 Than all the lays
 To their monarch's praise
 That the harpers of Reged sung.
 He loved better to rest by wood or
 river,
 Than in bower of his bride, Dame
 Guenever,
 For he left that lady, so lovely of
 cheer,
 To follow adventures of danger and
 fear;
 And the frank-hearted Monarch full
 little did wot,
 That she smiled, in his absence, on
 brave Lancelot.

XII.

“He rode, till over down and dell
 The shade more broad and deeper fell;
 And though around the mountain's
 head
 Flow'd streams of purple, and gold,
 and red,
 Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
 Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd
 the stream.
 With toil the King his way pursued
 Bylonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,
 Till on his course obliquely shone
 The narrow valley of SAINT JOHN,
 Down sloping to the western sky,
 Where lingering sunbeams love to lie.
 Right glad to feel those beams again,
 The King drew up his charger's rein;
 With gauntlet raised he screen'd his
 sight,
 As dazzled with the level light,
 And, from beneath his glove of mail,
 Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
 While 'gainst the sun his armour
 bright
 Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

* King Arthur's sword, called by Tennyson Excalibur.

XIII.

“Paled in by many a lofty hill,
 The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
 And, down its verdant bosom led,
 A winding brooklet found its bed.
 But, midst of the vale, a mound
 Arose with airy turrets crown'd,
 Buttress, and rampire's circling
 bound,
 And mighty keep and tower;
 Seem'd some primeval giant's hand,
 The castle's massive walls had
 plann'd,
 A ponderous bulwark to withstand
 Ambitious Nimrod's power.
 Above the moated entrance slung,
 The balanced drawbridge trembling
 hung,
 As jealous of a foe;
 Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
 With iron studded, clench'd, and
 barr'd,
 And prong'd portcullis, join'd to
 guard
 The gloomy pass below.
 But the grey walls no banners
 crown'd,
 Upon the watch-tower's airy round
 No warder stood his horn to sound,
 No guard beside the bridge was
 found,
 And where the Gothic gateway
 frown'd,
 Glanced neither bill nor bow.

XIV.

“Beneath the castle's gloomy pride
 In ample round did Arthur ride
 Three times; nor living thing he
 spied,
 Nor heard a living sound,
 Save that, awakening from her dream,
 The owlet now began to scream,
 In concert with the rushing stream.
 That wash'd the battled mound.
 He lighted from his goodly steed,
 And he left him to graze on bank and
 mead;
 And slowly he climb'd the narrow
 way,
 That reach'd the entrance grim and
 grey,

And he stood the outward arch be-
low,
And his bugle-horn prepared to blow,
In summons blithe and bold,
Deeming to rouse from iron sleep
The guardian of this dismal Keep,
Which well he guess'd the hold
Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,
Or pagan of gigantic limb,
The tyrant of the wold.

XV.

“The ivory bugle’s golden tip
Twice touch’d the monarch’s manly
lip,
And twice his hand withdrew.
—Think not but Arthur’s heart was
good!
His shield was cross’d by the blessed
rod,
Had a pagan host before him stood,
He had charged them through
and through;
Yet the silence of that ancient place
Sunk on his heart, and he paused a
pace
Ere yet his horn he blew.
But, instant as its ’larum rung,
The castle gate was open flung,
Portcullis rose with crashing groan
Full harshly up its groove of stone;
The balance-beams obey’d the blast,
And down the trembling drawbridge
cast
The vaulted arch before him lay,
With nought to bar the gloomy way,
And onward Arthur paced, with hand
On Caliburn’s resistless brand.

XVI.

“A hundred torches, flashing bright,
Dispell’d at once the gloomy night
That lour’d along the walls,
And show’d the King’s astonish’d
sight
The inmates of the halls.
Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,
Nor giant huge of form and limb,
Nor heathen knight, was there;
But the cressets, which odours flung
aloft,

Show’d by their yellow light and soft,
A band of damsels fair:—

Onward they came, like summer
wave
That dances to the shore;
An hundred voices welcome gave,
And welcome o’er and o’er!
An hundred lovely hands assail
The bucklers of the monarch’s mail,
And busy labour’d to unhasp
Rivet of steel and iron clasp.
One wrapp’d him in a mantle fair,
And one flung odours on his hair;
His short curl’d ringlets one smooth’d
down,
One wreathed them with a myrtle
crown.
A bride upon her wedding-day,
Was tended ne’er by troop so gay.

XVII.

“Loud laugh’d they all,—the King,
in vain,
With questions task’d the giddy train;
Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
’Twas one reply—loud laugh’d they
all.
Then o’er him mimic chains they
flung,
Framed of the fairest flowers of
spring.
While some their gentle force unite,
Onward to drag the wondering
knight,
Some, bolder, urge his pace with
blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had won.
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintadgel’s spear;
Two, laughing at their lack of
strength,
Dragg’d Caliburn in cumbrous length;
One, while she aped a martial stride,
Placed on her brows the helmet’s
pride;
Then scream’d, ’twixt laughter and
surprise,
To feel its depth o’erwhelm her eyes.
With rebel-shout, and triumph-song,
Thus gaily march’d the giddy throng.

XVIII.

“Through many a gallery and hall
They led, I ween, their royal thrall;
At length, beneath a fair arcade
Their march and song at once they
staid.

The eldest maiden of the band,
(The lovely maid was scarce
eighteen,)

Raised, with imposing air her hand,
And reverent silence did command,

On entrance of their Queen,
And they were mute.—But as a glance
They steal on Arthur’s countenance
Bewilder’d with surprise,
Their smother’d mirth again ’gan
speak,

In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX.

“The attributes of those high days
Now only live in minstrel-lays;
For Nature, now exhausted, still
Was then profuse of good and ill.
Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soar’d beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless
beam

As lights not now a lover’s dream.
Yet e’en in that romantic age,

Ne’er were such charms by mortal
seen,

As Arthur’s dazzled eyes engage,
When forth on that enchanted stage,
With glittering train of maid and
page,

Advanced the castle’s Queen!
While up the hall she slowly pass’d,
Her dark eye on the King she cast,

That flash’d expression strong;
The longer dwelt that lingering look,
Her cheek the livelier colour took,
And scarce the shame-faced King
could brook

The gaze that lasted long.
A sage who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with
pride,

Had whisper’d, ‘Prince, beware!
From the chafed tiger rend the prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay

Bar the fell dragon’s blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare!’—

XX.

“At once that inward strife sup-
press’d,

The dame approach’d her warlike
guest,

With greeting in that fair degree,
Where female pride and courtesy
Are blended with such passing art
As awes at once and charms the heart.

A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness ’gan to crave

Construction fair and true
Of her light maidens’ idle mirth,
Who drew from lonely glens their
birth,

Nor knew to pay to stranger worth
And dignity their due;

And then she pray’d that he would
rest

That night her castle’s honour’d guest.
The Monarch meekly thanks ex-
press’d;

The banquet rose at her behest,
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
Apace the evening flew.

XXI.

“The Lady sate the Monarch by,
Now in her turn abash’d and shy,
And with indifference seem’d to hear
The toys he whispered in her ear.

Her bearing modest was and fair,
Yet shadows of constraint were there,
That show’d an over-cautious care
Some inward thought to hide;

Oft did she pause in full reply,
And oft cast down her large dark eye,
Oft check’d the soft voluptuous sigh,
That heaved her bosom’s pride.

Slight symptoms these, but shepherds
know

How hot the midday sun shall glow,
From the mist of morning sky;

And so the wily Monarch guess’d,
That this assumed restraint express’d
More ardent passions in the breast,
Than ventured to the eye.

Closer he press’d, while beakers rang,
While maidens laughed and min-
strels sang,

Still closer to her ear—
 But why pursue the common tale?
 Or wherefore show how knights pre-
 vail
 When ladies dare to hear?
 Or wherefore trace from what slight
 cause
 Its source one tyrant passion draws,
 Till, mastering all within,
 Where lives the man that has not
 tried,
 How mirth can into folly glide
 And folly into sin?"

CANTO SECOND.

I.

Lynlph's Tale, continued.

"ANOTHER day, another day,
 And yet another glides away!
 The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
 Maraud on Britain's shores again.
 Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
 Lies loitering in a lady's bower;
 The horn, that foemen wont to fear,
 Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian
 deer,
 And Caliburn, the British pride,
 Hangs useless by a lover's side.

II.

"Another day, another day,
 And yet another, glides away!
 Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
 He thinks not of the Table Round;
 In lawless love dissolved his life,
 He thinks not of his beauteous wife:
 Better he loves to snatch a flower
 From bosom of his paramour,
 Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
 The honours of his heathen crest!
 Better to wreath, 'mid tresses brown,
 The heron's plume her hawk struck
 down,
 Than o'er the altar gives to flow
 The banners of a Paynim foe.
 Thus, week by week, and day by day,
 His life inglorious glides away:
 But she, that soothes his dream, with
 fear
 Beholds his hour of waking near!

III.

'Much force have mortal charms to
 stay
 Our peace in Virtue's toilsome way;
 But Guendolen's might far outshine
 Each maid of merely mortal line.
 Her mother was of human birth,
 Her sire a Genie of the earth,
 In days of old deem'd to preside
 O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
 By youths and virgins worshipp'd
 long,
 With festive dance and choral song,
 Till, when the cross to Britain came,
 On heathen altars died the flame.
 Now, deep in Wastdale solitude,
 The downfall of his rights he rued,
 And, born of his resentment heir,
 He train'd to guile that lady fair,
 To sink in slothful sin and shame
 The champions of the Christian name.
 Well skill'd to keep vain thoughts
 alive,
 And all to promise, nought to give,—
 The timid youth had hope in store,
 The bold and pressing gain'd no
 more.
 As wilder'd children leave their home
 After the rainbow's arch to roam,
 Her lovers barter'd fair esteem,
 Faith, fame, and honour, for a dream.

IV.

"Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
 She practised thus—till Arthur came;
 Then, frail humanity had part,
 And all the mother claim'd her heart.
 Forgot each rule her father gave,
 Sunk from a princess to a slave,
 Too late must Guendolen deplore,
 He, that has all, can hope no more!
 Now must she see her lover strain,
 At every turn her feeble chain;
 Watch, to new-bind each knot, and
 shrink
 To view each fast-decaying link.
 Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
 Her vest to zone, her locks to braid;
 Each varied pleasure heard her call,
 The feast, the tourney, and the ball:
 Her storied lore she next applies,
 Taxing her mind to aid her eyes;

Now more than mortal wise, and
then
In female softness sunk again :
Now, raptur'd, with each wish com-
plying,
With feign'd reluctance now deny-
ing;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart—and all in vain !

V.

“ Thus in the garden's narrow
bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic
round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realms to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill com-
bines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse, and arbour, decks the
spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way—
Vain art! vain hope! 'tis fruitless
all!
At length we reach the bounding
wall,
And, sick of flower and trim-dress'd
tree,
Long for rough glades and forest
free.

VI.

“ Three summer months had scantily
flown,
When Arthur, in embarrass'd tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a Monarch sway,
Duties, unknown to humbler men,
Must tear her knight from Guendo-
len.—
She listen'd silently the while,
Her mood express'd in bitter smile;
Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
And oit resume the unfinish'd tale,
Confessing, by his downcast eye,
The wrong he sought to justify.
He ceased. A moment mute she
gazed,

And then her looks to heaven she
raised;
One palm her temples veiled, to hide
The tear that sprung in spite of
pride!
The other for an instant press'd
The foldings of her silken vest !

VII.

“ At her reproachful sign and look,
The hint the Monarch's conscience
took.
Eager he spoke—‘ No, lady, no !
Deem not of British Arthur so,
Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love.
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir ;
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To choose that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer-day in lists shall strive
My knights,—the bravest knights
alive,—
And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for
bride.’—
He spoke, with voice resolved and
high—
The lady deign'd him not reply.

VIII.

“ At dawn of morn, ere on the brake
His matins did a warbler make,
Or stir'd his wing to brush away
A single dew-drop from the spray,
Ere yet a sunbeam through the mist,
The castle-battlements had kiss'd,
The gates revolve, the drawbridge
falls,
And Arthur sallies from the walls.
Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,
And steel from spur to helmet-
plume,
His Lybian steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neigh'd beneath his load.
The Monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo! to his astonish'd ken
Appear'd the form of Guendolen.

IX.

"Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood:
Sandall'd her feet, her ankles bare,
And eagle-plumage deck'd her hair;
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.
'Thou goest,' she said, 'and ne'er
again

Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
Full fain would I this hour delay,
Though weak the wish—yet, wilt thou
stay?

—No! thou look'st forward. Still
attend,—

Part we like lover and like friend.'
She raised the cup—'Not this the
juice

The sluggish vines of earth produce;
Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
Which Genii love!'—she said, and
quaff'd;

And strange unwonted lustres fly
From her flush'd cheek and sparkling
eye.

X.

"The courteous Monarch bent him
low,

And, stooping down from saddlebow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell.
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright—

—The peasant still can show the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.—
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,
That burn'd and blighted where it
fell!

The frantic steed rush'd up the dell,
As whistles from the bow the reed;
Nor bit nor rein could check his
speed,

Until he gain'd the hill;
'Then breath and sinew fail'd apace,
And, reeling from the desperate race,
He stood, exhausted, still.
The Monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed—

Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky;
But, on the spot where once they
frown'd,

The lonely streamlet brawl'd around
A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rocks and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The King wends back to fair Carlisle:
And cares, that cumber royal sway,
Wore memory of the past away.

XI.

"Full fifteen years, and more, were
sped,
Each brought new wreaths to Arthur's
head.

Twelve bloody fields, with glory
fought,

The Saxon, to subjection brought:
Rython, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne:
The Pictish Gillamore in fight,
And Roman Lucius own'd his might;
And wide were through the world
renown'd

The glories of his Table Round.
Each knight who sought adventurous
fame,

To the bold court of Britain came,
And all who suffer'd causeless wrong,
From tyrant proud, or faitour strong,
Sought Arthur's presence to com-
plain,

Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII.

"For this the King with pomp and
pride,

Held solemn court at Whitsuntide,
And summon'd Prince and Peer,
All who owed homage for their land,
Or who craved knighthood from his
hand,

Or who had succour to demand,
To come from far and near.
At such high tide, were glee and
game

Mingled with feats of martial fame,
For many a stranger champion came,
In lists to break a spear;
And not a knight of Arthur's host,

Save that he trode some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost
Before him must appear.

Ah, Minstrels! when the Table Round
Arose, with all its warriors crown'd,
There was a theme for bards to
sound

In triumph to their string!
Five hundred years are past and
gone,

But time shall draw his dying groan,
Ere he behold the British throne
Begirt with such a ring!

XIII.

"The heralds named the appointed
spot,
As Caerleon or Camelot,
Or Carlisle fair and free.

At Penrith, now, the feast was set,
And in fair Eamont's vale were met
The flower of Chivalry.

There Galaad sate with manly grace,
Yet maiden meekness in his face;
There Morolt of the iron mace,

And love-lorn Tristrem there:
And Dinadam with lively glance,
And Lanval with the fairy lance,
And Mordred with his look askance,
Brunor and Bevidere.

Why should I tell of numbers more?
Sir Cay, Sir Banner, and Sir Bore,
Sir Carodac the keen,

The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
And Lancelot, that ever more

Look'd stol'n-wise on the Queen.

XIV.

"When wine and mirth did most
abound,
And harpers play'd their blithest
round,

A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
And marshals clear'd the ring;

A maiden, on a palfrey white,
Heading a band of damsels bright,
Paced through the circle, to alight

And kneel before the King.
Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
Her graceful boldness check'd by
awe,

Her dress, like huntress of the wold,
Her bow and baldrick trapp'd with
gold,

Her sandall'd feet, her ankles bare,
And the eagle-plume that deck'd her
hair.

Graceful her veil she backward
flung—

The King, as from his seat he sprung,
Almost cried, 'Guendolen!'

But 'twas a face more frank and wild,
Betwixt the woman and the child,
Where less of magic beauty smiled
Than of the race of men;

And in the forehead's haughty
grace,

The lines of Britain's royal race,
Pendragon's you might ken.

XV.

"Faltering, yet gracefully, she said—
'Great Prince! behold an orphan
maid,

In her departed mother's name,
A father's vow'd protection claim!
The vow was sworn in desert lone,
In the deep valley of St. John.'

At once the King the suppliant
raised,

And kiss'd her brow, her beauty
praised;

His vow, he said, should well be
kept,

Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd,—
Then, conscious, glanced upon his
queen;

But she, unruffled at the scene
Of human frailty, construed mild,
Look'd upon Lancelot and smiled.

XVI.

"'Up! up! each knight of gallant
crest

Take buckler, spear, and brand!
He that to-day shall bear him best,
Shall win my Gyneth's hand.

And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,
Shall bring a noble dower;

Both fair Strath-Clyde and Reged
wide,

And Carlisle town and tower.
Then might you hear each valiant
knight,

To page and squire that cried,
 'Bring my armour bright, and my
 courser wight!

'Tis not each day that a warrior's
 might

May win a royal bride.'

Then cloaks and caps of maintenance

In haste aside they fling;

The helmets glance, and gleams the
 lance,

And the steel-weaved hauberks
 ring.

Small care had they of their peaceful
 array,

They might gather it that wolde;

For brake and bramble glitter'd gay,
 With pearls and cloth of gold.

XVII.

“ Within trumpet sound of the Table
 Round

Were fifty champions free,

And they all arise to fight that
 prize,—

They all arise but three.

Nor love's fond troth, nor wedlock's
 oath,

One gallant could withhold,

For priests will allow of a broken
 vow,

For penance or for gold.

But sigh and glance from ladies
 bright

Among the troop were thrown,

To plead their right, and true-love
 plight,

And 'plain of honour flown.

The knights they busied them so
 fast,

With buckling spur and belt,

That sigh and look, by ladies cast,

Were neither seen nor felt.

From pleading, or upbraiding glance,

Each gallant turns aside,

And only thought, 'If speeds my
 lance,

A queen becomes my bride!

She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged
 wide,

And Carlisle tower and town;

She is the loveliest maid, beside,

That ever heir'd a crown.'

So in haste their coursers they be-
 stride,
 And strike their visors down.

XVIII.

“ The champions, arm'd in martial
 sort,

Have throng'd into the list,

And but three knights of Arthur's
 court

Are from the tourney miss'd.

And still these lovers' fame survives

For faith so constant shown,—

There were two who loved their
 neighbour's wives,

And one who loved his own.

The first was Lancelot de Lac,

The second Tristrem bold,

The third was valiant Carodac,

Who won the cup of gold,

What time, of all King Arthur's
 crew,

(Thereof came jeer and laugh,)

He, as the mate of lady true,

Alone the cup could quaff.

Though envy's tongue would fain
 surmise,

That but for very shame,

Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,

Had given both cup and dame;

Yet, since but one of that fair court

Was true to wedlock's shrine,

Brand him who will with base re-
 port,—

He shall be free from mine.

XIX.

“ Now caracoled the steeds in air,

Now plumes and pennons wanton'd
 fair,

As all around the lists so wide

In panoply the champions ride.

King Arthur saw with startled eye,

The flower of chivalry march by,

The bulwark of the Christian creed,

The kingdom's shield in hour of
 need.

Too late he thought him of the woe

Might from their civil conflict flow;

For well he knew they would not
 part

Till cold was many a gallant heart.

His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
And Gyneth then apart he drew;
To her his leading-staff resign'd,
But added caution grave and kind.

XX.

“ ‘Thou seest, my child, as promise-bound,
I bid the trump for tourney sound.
Take thou my warder as the queen
And umpire of the martial scene;
But mark thou this:—as Beauty bright
Is polar star to valiant knight,
As at her word his sword he draws,
His fairest guerdon her applause,
So gentle maid should never ask
Of knighthood vain and dangerous task;
And Beauty's eyes should ever be
Like the twin stars that soothe the sea,
And Beauty's breath shall whisper peace,
And bid the storm of battle cease.
I tell thee this, lest all too far,
These knights urge tourney into war.
Bliethe at the trumpet let them go,
And fairly counter blow for blow;—
No striplings these, who succour need
For a razed helm or falling steed.
But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,
And threatens death or deadly harm,
Thy sire entreats, thy king commands,
Thou drop the warder from thy hands.
Trust thou thy father with thy fate,
Doubt not he choose thee fitting mate;
Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride
A rose of Arthur's chaplet died.’—

XXI.

“ A proud and discontented glow
O'ershadow'd Gyneth's brow of snow;
She put the warder by:—
‘Reserve thy boon, my liege,’ she said,
‘Thus chaffer'd down and limited,

Debased and narrow'd for a maid
Of less degree than I.
No petty chief but holds his heir
At a more honour'd price and rare
Than Britain's King holds me!
Although the sun-burn'd maid, for dower,
Has but her father's rugged tower,
His barren hill and lee.’—
King Arthur swore, ‘By crown and sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That a whole summer's day should strive
His knights, the bravest knights alive!’
‘Recall thine oath! and to her glen
Poor Gyneth can return agen!
Not on thy daughter will the stain,
That soils thy sword and crown remain.
But think not she will e'er be bride
Save to the bravest, proved and tried;
Pendragon's daughter will not fear
For clashing sword or splinter'd spear,
Nor shrink though blood should flow;
And all too well sad Guendolen
Hath taught the faithlessness of men,
That child of hers should pity, when
Their need they undergo.’—

XXII.

“ He frown'd and sigh'd, the Monarch bold:—
‘I give—what I may not withhold;
For, not for danger, dread, or death,
Must British Arthur break his faith.
Too late I mark, thy mother's art
Hath taught thee this relentless part.
I blame her not, for she had wrong,
But not to these my faults belong.
Use, then, the warder as thou wilt;
But trust me, that, if life be spilt,
In Arthur's love, in Arthur's grace,
Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place.
With that he turn'd his head aside,
Nor brook'd to gaze upon her pride,
As, with the truncheon raised, she sate
The arbitress of mortal fate:

Nor brook'd to mark, in ranks dis-
posed,
How the bold champions stood op-
posed,
For shrill the trumpet-flourish fell
Upon his ear like passing bell !
Then first from sight of martial fray
Did Britain's hero turn away.

XXIII.

"But Gyneth heard the clangour
high,
As hears the hawk the partridge cry.
Oh, blame her not ! the blood was
hers,
That at the trumpet's summons
stirs !—

And e'en the gentlest female eye
Might the brave strife of chivalry
A while untroubled view ;
So well accomplish'd was each knight,
To strike and to defend in fight,
Their meeting was a goodly sight,
While plate and mail held true.
The lists with painted plumes were
strewn,
Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breastplate bloodless
shone,
It seem'd their feather'd crests alone
Should this encounter rue.
And ever, as the combat grows,
The trumpet's cheery voice arose,
Like lark's shrill song the flourish
flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows
The merry greenwood through.

XXIV.

"But soon to earnest grew their
game,
The spears drew blood, the swords
struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there
came
Knights, who shall rise no more !
Gone was the pride the war that
graced,
Gay shields were cleft, and crests de-
faced,
And steel coats riven, and helms un-
braced,

And pennons stream'd with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly
way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with headlong
sway,
Unheeding where they fell ;
And now the trumpet's clamours
seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing
scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulping
stream,
The sinking seaman's knell !

XXV.

"Seem'd in this dismal hour, that
Fate
Would Camlan's ruin antedate,
And spare dark Mordred's crime ;
Already gasping on the ground
Lie twenty of the Table Round,
Of chivalry the prime.
Arthur, in anguish, tore away
From head and beard his tresses
grey,
And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
And quaked with ruth and fear ;
But still she deem'd her mother's
shade
Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade
The sign that had the slaughter staid,
And chid the rising tear.
Then Brunor, Taulas, Mador, fell,
Helias the White, and Lionel,
And many a champion more ;
Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
Lies gasping in his gore.
Vanoc, by mighty Morolt press'd
Even to the confines of the list,
Young Vanoc of the beardless face,
(Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's
race,)
O'erpower'd at Gyneth's footstool
bled,
His heart's-blood dyed her sandals
red.
But then the sky was overcast,
Then howl'd at once a whirlwind's
blast,

And, rent by sudden throes,
Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking
earth,
And from the gulf, — tremendous
birth! —
The form of Merlin rose.

XXVI.

“Sternly the Wizard Prophet eyed
The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
And sternly raised his hand:—
'Madmen,' he said, 'your strife for-
bear,
And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear
The doom thy fates demand!
Long shall close in stony sleep
Eyes for ruth that would not weep;
Iron lethargy shall seal
Heart that pity scorn'd to feel.
Yet, because thy mother's art
Warp'd thine unsuspecting heart,
And for love of Arthur's race,
Punishment is blent with grace,
Thou shalt bear thy penance lone
In the Valley of St. John,
And this weird* shall overtake thee;
Sleep, until a knight shall wake
thee,
For feats of arms as far renown'd
As warrior of the Table Round.
Long endurance of thy slumber
Well may teach the world to num-
ber
All their woes from Gyneth's pride,
When the Red Cross champions
died.'

XXVII.

“As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth's eye
Slumber's load begins to lie;
Fear and anger vainly strive
Still to keep its light alive.
Twice, with effort and with pause,
O'er her brow her hand she draws;
Twice her strength in vain she tries,
From the fatal chair to rise,
Merlin's magic doom is spoken,
Yanoc's death must now be wroken.
Slow the dark-fringed eyelids fall,
Curtaining each azure ball,
Slowly as on summer eyes

*Doom.

Violets fold their dusky leaves.
The weighty baton of command
Now bears down her sinking hand,
On her shoulder droops her head;
Net of pearl and golden thread,
Bursting, gave her locks to flow
O'er her arm and breast of snow.
And so lovely seem'd she there,
Spell-bound in her ivory chair,
That her angry sire, repenting,
Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
And the champions, for her sake,
Would again the contest wake;
Till, in necromantic night,
Gyneth vanish'd from their sight.

XXVIII.

“Still she bears her weird alone,
In the Valley of St. John;
And her semblance oft will seem,
Mingling in a champion's dream,
Of her weary lot to 'plain,
And crave his aid to burst her chain.
While her wondrous tale was new,
Warriors to her rescue drew,
East and west, and south and north,
From the Liffy, Thames, and Forth.
Most have sought in vain the glen,
Tower nor castle could they ken;
Nor at every time or tide,
Nor by every eye, descried.
Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,
Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,
When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few return'd no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Wellnigh lost is Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till waken'd by the trump of doom.”

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.

Here pause my tale; for all too soon,
My Lucy, comes the hour of noon.
Already from thy lofty dome
Its courtly inmates 'gin to roam,

And each, to kill the goodly day
 That God has granted them, his way
 Of lazy sauntering has sought;
 Lordlings and wtlings not a few,
 Incapable of doing aught,
 Yet ill at ease with nought to do.
 Here is no longer place for me;
 For, Lucy, thou wouldst blush to see
 Some phantom fashionably thin,
 With limb of lath and kerchief'd
 chin,
 And lounging gape, or sneering
 grin,
 Steal sudden on our privacy.
 And how should I, so humbly born,
 Endure the graceful spectre's scorn?
 Faith! ill, I fear, while conjuring
 wand
 Of English oak is hard at hand.

II.

Or grant the hour be all too soon
 For Hessian boot and pantaloon,
 And grant the lounge seldom strays
 Beyond the smooth and gravell'd
 maze,
 Laud we the gods, that Fashion's
 train
 Holds hearts of more adventurous
 strain.
 Artists are hers, who scorn to trace
 Their rules from Nature's boundless
 grace,
 But their right paramount assert
 To limit her by pedant art,
 Damning whate'er of vast and fair
 Exceeds a canvass three feet square.
 This thicket, for their *gumption* fit,
 May furnish such a happy *bit*.
 Bards, too, are hers, wont to recite
 Their own sweet lays by waxen light,
 Half in the salver's tingle drown'd,
 While the *chasse-café* glides around;
 And such may hither secret stray,
 To labour an extempore:
 Or sportsman, with his boisterous
 hollo
 May here his wiser spaniel follow,
 Or stage-struck Juliet may presume
 To choose this bower for tiring-room;
 And we alike must shun regard,

From painter, player, sportsman,
 bard.

Insects that skim in Fashion's sky,
 Wasp, blue-bottle, or butterfly,
 Lucy, have all alarms for us,
 For all can hum and all can buzz.

III.

But oh, my Lucy, say how long
 We still must dread this trifling
 throng,
 And stoop to hide, with coward art,
 The genuine feelings of the heart!
 No parents thine whose just com-
 mand
 Should rule their child's obedient
 hand;
 Thy guardians, with contending voice,
 Press each his individual choice.
 And which is Lucy's?—Can it be
 That puny fop, trimm'd cap-a-pee,
 Who loves in the saloon to show
 The arms that never knew a foe;
 Whose sabre trails along the ground,
 Whose legs in shapeless boots are
 drown'd;
 A new Achilles, sure,—the steel
 lled from his breast to fence his heel;
 One, for the simple manly grace
 That wont to deck our martial race,
 Who comes in foreign trashery
 Of tinkling chain and spur,
 A walking haberdashery,
 Of feathers, lace, and fur:
 In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
 Horse-milliner of modern days?

IV.

Or is it he, the wordy youth,
 So early train'd for statesman's
 part,
 Who talks of honour, faith, and
 truth,
 As themes that he has got by
 heart;
 Whose ethics Chesterfield can teach,
 Whose logic is from Single-speech;
 Who scorns the meanest thought to
 vent,
 Save in the phrase of Parliament;
 Who, in a tale of cat and mouse,
 Calls "order," and "divides the
 house,"

Who "craves permission to reply,"
 Whose "noble friend is in his eye;"
 Whose loving tender some have
 reckon'd

A motion, you should gladly second?

V.

What, neither? Can there be a third,
 To such resistless swains preferr'd?—
 O why, my Lucy, turn aside,
 With that quick glance of injured
 pride?

Forgive me, love, I cannot bear
 That alter'd and resentful air.
 Were all the wealth of Russel mine,
 And all the rank of Howard's line,
 All would I give for leave to dry
 That dewdrop trembling in thine eye.
 Think not I fear such fops can while
 From Lucy more than careless smile;
 But yet if wealth and high degree
 Give gilded counters currency,
 Must I not fear, when rank and birth
 Stamp the pure ore of genuine worth?
 Nobles there are, whose martial fires
 Rival the fame that raised their sires,
 And patriots, skill'd through storms
 of fate

To guide and guard the reeling state.
 Such, such there are—if such should
 come,

Arthur must tremble and be dumb,
 Self-exiled seek some distant shore,
 And mourn till life and grief are o'er.

VI.

What sight, what signal of alarm,
 That Lucy clings to Arthur's arm?
 Or is it, that the rugged way
 Makes Beauty lean on lover's stay?
 Oh, no! for on the vale and brake,
 Nor sight nor sounds of danger wake,
 And this trim sward of velvet green,
 Were carpet for the Fairy Queen.
 That pressure slight was but to tell,
 That Lucy loves her Arthur well,
 And fain would banish from his mind
 Suspicious fear and doubt unkind.

VII.

But wouldst thou bid the demons fly
 Like mist before the dawning sky,
 There is but one resistless spell—

Say, wilt thou guess, or must I tell?
 'Twere hard to name, in minstrel
 phrase,

A landalet and four blood-bays,
 But bards agree this wizard band
 Can but be bound in Northern land:
 'Tis there—nay, draw not back thy
 hand!—

'Tis there this slender finger round
 Must golden amulet be bound,
 Which, bless'd with many a holy
 prayer,

Can change to rapture lovers' care,
 And doubt and jealousy shall die,
 And fears give place to ecstasy.

VIII.

Now, trust me, Lucy, all too long
 Has been thy lover's tale and song.
 O, why so silent, love, I pray?
 Have not I spoke the livelong day?
 And will not Lucy deign to say
 One word her friend to bless?
 I ask but one—a simple sound,
 Within three little letters bound,
 O, let the word be YES!

CANTO THIRD.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

LONG loved, long woo'd, and lately
 won,
 My life's best hope, and now mine
 own!

Doth not this rude and Alpine glen
 Recall our favourite haunts agen?
 A wild resemblance we can trace,
 Though reft of every softer grace,
 As the rough warrior's brow may
 bear

A likeness to a sister fair.
 Full well advised our Highland host,
 That this wild pass on foot be
 cross'd,

While round Ben-Cruach's mighty
 base

Wheel the slow steeds and lingering
 chaise.

The keen old carle, with Scottish
 pride,
 He praised his glen and mountains
 wide;

An eye he bears for nature's face,
 Ay, and for woman's lovely grace.
 Even in such mean degree we find
 The subtle Scot's observing mind;
 For, nor the chariot nor the train
 Could gape of vulgar wonder gain,
 But when old Allan would expound
 Of *Beal-na-paish** the Celtic sound,
 His bonnet doff'd, and bow, applied
 His legend to my bonny bride;
 While Lucy blush'd beneath his eye,
 Courteous and cautious, shrewd and
 sly.

II.

Enough of him.—Now, ere we lose,
 Plunged in the vale, the distant
 views,

Turn thee, my love! look back once
 more

To the blue lake's retiring shore.

On its smooth breast the shadows
 seem

Like objects in a morning dream,

What time the slumberer is aware

He sleeps, and all the vision's air :

Even so, on yonder liquid lawn,

In hues of bright reflection drawn,

Distinct the shaggy mountains lie,

Distinct the rocks, distinct the sky;

The summer-clouds so plain we note,

That we might count each dappled

spot :

We gaze and we admire, yet know

The scene is all delusive show.

Such dreams of bliss would Arthur

draw,

When first his Lucy's form he saw;

Yet sigh'd and sicken'd as he drew,

Despairing they could e'er prove

true!

III.

But, Lucy, turn thee now, to view

Up the fair glen, our destin'd
 way :

The fairy path that we pursue,

Distinguish'd but by greener hue,

Winds round the purple brae,

While Alpine flowers of varied dye

For carpets serve, or tapestry.

* *Beal-na-paish*, in English the Vale of the
 Bridal.

See how the little runnels leap,
 In threads of silver, down the steep,
 To swell the brooklet's moan!

Seems that the Highland Naiad
 grieves,

Fantastic while her crown she
 weaves,

Of rowan, birch, and alder-leaves,

So lovely, and so lone.

There's no illusion there; these flow-
 ers,

That wailing brook, these lovely bow-
 ers,

Are, Lucy, all our own;

And, since thine Arthur call'd thee
 wife,

Such seems the prospect of his life,

A lovely path, on-winding still,

By gurgling brook and sloping hill.

'Tis true, that mortals cannot tell

What waits them in the distant dell;

But be it hap, or be it harm,

We tread the pathway arm in arm.

IV.

And now, my Lucy, wot'st thou why

I could thy bidding twice deny,

When twice you pray'd I would again

Resume the legendary strain

Of the bold knight of Triermain?

At length yon peevish vow you swore,

That you would sue to me no more,

Until the minstrel fit drew near,

And made me prize a listening ear.

But, loveliest, when thou first didst

pray

Continuance of the knightly lay,

Was it not on the happy day

That made thy hand mine own?

When, dizzied with mine ecstasy,

Nought past, or present, or to be,

Could I or think on, hear, or see,

Save, Lucy, thee alone!

A giddy draught my rapture was,

As ever chemist's magic gas.

V.

Again the summons I denied

In yon fair capital of Clyde :

My Harp—or let me rather choose

The good old classic form—my Muse,

(For Harp's an over-scudched phrase,

Worn out by bards of modern days,) My Muse, then—seldom will she wake, Save by dim wood and silent lake; She is the wild and rustic Maid, Whose foot unsandall'd loves to tread Where the soft greensward is inlaid With varied moss and thyme; And, lest the simple lily-braid, That coronets her temples, fade, She hides her still in greenwood shade, To meditate her rhyme.

VI.

And now she comes! The murmur dear Of the wild brook hath caught her ear, The glade hath won her eye, She longs to join with each blithe rill That dances down the Highland hill, Her blither melody. And now, my Lucy's way to cheer, She bids Ben-Cruach's echoes hear How closed the tale, my love whilere Loved for its chivalry. List how she tells, in notes of flame, "Child Roland to the dark tower came."

CANTO THIRD.

I.

BEWCASTLE now must keep the Hold, Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall, Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold Must only shoot from battled wall; And Liddesdale may buckle spur, And Teviot now may belt the brand, Tarras and Ewes keep nightly stir, And Eskdale foray Cumberland. Of wasted fields and plundered flocks The Borderers bootless may complain; They lack the sword of brave de Vaux, There comes no aid from Triermain. That lord, on high adventure bound, Hath wander'd forth alone, And day and night keeps watchful round In the valley of Saint John.

II.

When first began his vigil bold, The moon twelve summer nights was old, And shone both fair and full; High in the vault of cloudless blue, O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw Her light composed and cool. Stretch'd on the brown hill's heathy breast, Sir Roland eyed the vale; Chief where, distinguish'd from the rest, Those clustering rocks uprear'd their crest, The dwelling of the fair distress'd, As told grey Lyulph's tale. Thus as he lay the lamp of night Was quivering on his armour bright, In beams that rose and fell, And danced upon his buckler's boss, That lay beside him on the moss, As on a crystal well.

III.

Ever he watch'd, and oft he deem'd, While on the mound the moonlight stream'd, It alter'd to his eyes; Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change To buttress'd walls their shapeless range, Fain think, by transmutation strange, He saw grey turrets rise. But scarce his heart with hope throb'd high, Before the wild illusions fly, Which fancy had conceived, Abetted by an anxious eye That long'd to be deceived. It was a fond deception all, Such as, in solitary hall, Beguiles the musing eye, When, gazing on the sinking fire, Bulwark, and battlement, and spire, In the red gulf we spy. For, seen by moon of middle night, Or by the blaze of noontide bright, Or by the dawn of morning light,

Or evening's western flame,
In every tide, at every hour,
In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
The rocks remain'd the same.

IV.

Oft has he traced the charmed
mound,
Oft climb'd its crest, or paced it
round,
Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
To a rough fortress bore.
Yet still his watch the Warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom
sleeps,
And drinks but of the well;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
Invoking every saint at need,
For aid to burst his spell.

V.

And now the moon her orb has hid,
And dwindled to a silver thread,
Dim seen in middle heaven,
While o'er its curve careering fast,
Before the fury of the blast
The midnight clouds are driven.
The brooklet raved, for on the hills,
The upland showers had swoln the
rills,
And down the torrents came;
Mutter'd the distant thunder dread,
And frequent o'er the vale was
spread
A sheet of lightning flame.
De Vaux, within his mountain cave,
(No human step the storm durst
brave,)
To moody meditation gave
Each faculty of soul,
Till, lull'd by distant torrent sound,
And the sad winds that whistled
round,
Upon his thoughts, in musing
drown'd,
A broken slumber stole.

VI.

'Twas then was heard a heavy sound,
(Sound, strange and fearful there
to hear,
'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues
around,
Dwelt but the gorcock and the
deer:)
As, starting from his couch of fern,
Again he heard in clangour stern,
That deep and solemn swell,—
Twelve times, in measured tone, it
spoke,
Like some proud minster's pealing
clock,
Or city's 'larum-bell.
What thought was Roland's first
when fell,
In that deep wilderness, the knell
Upon his startled ear?
To slander warrior were I loth,
Yet must I hold my minstrel troth,—
It was a thought of fear.

VII.

But lively was the mingled thrill
That chased that momentary chill,
For Love's keen wish was there,
And eager Hope, and Valour high,
And the proud glow of Chivalry,
That burn'd to do and dare.
Forth from the cave the Warrior
rush'd,
Long ere the mountain-voice was
hush'd,
That answer'd to the knell;
For long and far the unwonted sound,
Eddying in echoes round and round,
Was toss'd from fell to fell;
And Glaramara answer flung,
And Grisdale-pike responsive rung,
And Legbert heights their echoes
swung,
As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII.

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed
The Knight, bedeaft and amazed,
Till all was hush'd and still,
Save the swoln torrent's sullen roar,
And the night-blast that wildly bore
Its course along the hill,

Then on the northern sky there came
 A light, as of reflected flame,
 And over Legbert-head,
 As if by magic art controll'd,
 A mighty meteor slowly roll'd
 Its orb of fiery red;
 Thou wouldest have thought some demon dire
 Came mounted on that car of fire,
 To do his errand dread.
 Far on the sloping valley's course,
 On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
 Shingle and Scrae,* and Fell and
 Force,†
 A dusky light arose:
 Display'd, yet alter'd was the scene;
 Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
 Even the gay thicket's summer green,
 In bloody tincture glows.

IX.

De Vaux had mark'd the sunbeams
 set,
 At eve, upon the coronet
 Of that enchanted mound,
 And seen but crags at random flung,
 That, o'er the brawling torrent hung,
 In desolation frown'd.
 What sees he by that meteor's lour?—
 A banner'd Castle, keep, and tower,
 Return the lurid gleam,
 With battled walls and buttress fast,
 And barbican‡ and ballium§ vast,
 And airy flanking towers that cast,
 Their shadows on the stream.
 'Tis no deceit!—distinctly clear
 Crenell|| and parapet appear,
 While o'er the pile that meteor drear
 Makes momentary pause;
 Then forth its solemn path it drew,
 And fainter yet and fainter grew
 Those gloomy towers upon the view,
 As its wild light withdraws

X.

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
 O'er crag and stream, through brier
 and bush,
 Yet far he had not sped,

Ere sunk was that portentous light
 Behind the hills, and utter night
 Was on the valley spread.
 He paused perforce, and blew his
 horn,
 And, on the mountain-echoes borne,
 Was heard an answering sound,
 A wild and lonely trumpet-note,—
 In middle air it seem'd to float
 High o'er the battled mound;
 And sounds were heard, as when a
 guard,
 Of some proud castle, holding ward,
 Pace forth their nightly round.
 The valliant Knight of Triermaln
 Rung forth his challenge-blast again,
 But answer came there none;
 And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,
 Darkling he sought the vale in vain,
 Until the dawning shone;
 And when it dawn'd, that wondrous
 sight,
 Distinctly seen by meteor light,
 It all had pass'd away!
 And that enchanted mount once more
 A pile of granite fragments bore,
 As at the close of day.

XI.

Steel'd for the deed, De Vaux's heart,
 Scorn'd from his vent'rous quest to
 part,
 He walks the vale once more;
 But only sees, by night or day,
 That shatter'd pile of rocks so grey,
 Hears but the torrent's roar.
 Till when, through hills of azure
 borne,
 The moon renew'd her silver horn,
 Just at the time her waning ray
 Had faded in the dawning day,
 A summer mist arose;
 Adown the vale the vapours float,
 And cloudy undulations moat
 That tufted mound of mystic note,
 As round its base they close.
 And higher now the fleecy tide
 Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
 Until the airy billows hide
 The rock's majestic isle;
 It seem'd a veil of filmy lawn,

* Bank of loose stones. † Waterfall.

‡ The outer defence of a castle gate.

§ A fortified court.

|| Apertures for shooting arrows.

By some fantastic fairy drawn
Around enchanted pile.

XII.

The breeze came softly down the
brook,

And, sighing as it blew,
The veil of silver mist it shook,
And to De Vaux's eager look
Renew'd that wondrous view.

For, though the loitering vapour
braved

The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
Its mantle's dewy fold;
And still, when shook that filmy
screen,

Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
And Gothic battlements between
Their gloomy length unroll'd.

Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine
eye

Once more the fleeting vision die!

—The gallant knight 'gan speed
As prompt and light as, when the
hound

Is opening, and the horn is wound,
Careers the hunter's steed.

Down the steep dell his course amain
Hath rivall'd archer's shaft;

But ere the mound he could attain,
The rocks their shapeless form re-
gain,

And, mocking loud his labour vain,
The mountain spirits laugh'd.

Far up the echoing dell was borne
Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII.

Wroth wax'd the Warrior.—“Am I
then

Fool'd by the enemies of men,
Like a poor hind, whose homeward
way

Is haunted by malicious fay!
Is Triermain become your taunt,
De Vaux your scorn? False fiends,
avaunt!”

A weighty curtal-axe he bare;
The baleful blade so bright and
square,

And the tough shaft of heben wood,
Were oft in Scottish gore imbrued.

Backward his stately form he drew,
And at the rocks the weapon threw,
Just where one crag's projected crest
Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest.
Hurl'd with main force, the weapon's
shock

Rent a huge fragment of the rock.
If by mere strength, 'twere hard to
tell,

Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
But down the headlong ruin came,
With cloud of dust and flash of flame.
Down bank, o'er bush, its course was
borne,

Crush'd lay the copse, the earth was
torn,

Till staid at length, the ruin dread
Cumber'd the torrent's rocky bed,
And bade the water's high-swoln tide
Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV.

When ceased that thunder, Triermain
Survey'd the mound's rude front
again;

And lo! the ruin had laid bare,
Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
Whose moss'd and fractured steps
might lend

The means the summit to ascend;
And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
Began to scale these magic rocks,

And soon a platform won,
Where, the wild witchery to close,
Within three lances' length arose
The Castle of St. John!

No misty phantom of the air,
No meteor-blazon'd show was there;
In morning splendour, full and fair,
The massive fortress shone.

XV.

Embattled high and proudly tower'd,
Shaded by pond'rous flankers, low-
er'd

The portal's gloomy way.
Though for six hundred years and
more,

Its strength had brook'd the tem-
pest's roar,
The scutcheon'd emblems which it
bore

Had suffer'd no decay:
 But from the eastern battlement
 A turret had made sheer descent,
 And, down in recent ruin rent,
 In the mid torrent lay.
 Else, o'er the Castle's brow sublime,
 Insults of violence or of time
 Unfelt had pass'd away.
 In shapeless characters of yore,
 The gate this stern inscription bore:—

XVI.

Inscription.

“Patience waits the destined day,
 Strength can clear the cumber'd way.
 Warrior, who hast waited long,
 Firm of soul, of sinew strong,
 It is given thee to gaze
 On the pile of ancient days.
 Never mortal builder's hand
 This enduring fabric plann'd;
 Sign and sigil, word of power,
 From the earth raised keep and tower.
 View it o'er, and pace it round,
 Rampart, turret, battled mound.
 Dare no more! To cross the gate
 Were to tamper with thy fate;
 Strength and fortitude were vain,
 View it o'er—and turn again.”

XVII.

“That would I,” said the Warrior
 bold,
 “If that my frame were bent and old,
 And my thin blood dropp'd slow and
 cold,
 As icicle in thaw;
 But while my heart can feel it dance,
 Blietheas the sparkling wine of France,
 And this good arm wields sword or
 lance,
 I mock these words of awe!”
 He said; the wicket felt the sway
 Of his strong hand, and straight gave
 way,
 And, with rude crash and jarring bray,
 The rusty bolts withdraw;
 But o'er the threshold as he strode,
 And forward took the vaulted road,
 An unseen arm, with force amain,
 The ponderous gate flung close again,
 And rusted bolt and bar

Spontaneous took their place once
 more,
 While the deep arch with sullen roar
 Return'd their surly jar.
 “Now closed is the gin and the prey
 within
 By the rood of Lanercost!
 But he that would win the war-wolf's
 skin,
 May rue him of his boast.”
 Thus muttering, on the Warrior went,
 By dubious light down deep descent.

XVIII.

Unbarr'd, unlock'd, unwatch'd, a port
 Led to the Castle's outer court:
 There the main fortress, broad and
 tall,
 Spread its long range of bower and
 hall,
 And towers of varied size,
 Wrought with each ornament extreme,
 That Gothic art, in wildest dream
 Of fancy, could devise;
 But full between the Warrior's way
 And the main portal arch, there lay
 An inner moat,
 Nor bridge nor boat
 Affords De Vaux the means to cross
 The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
 His arms aside in haste he flings,
 Cuirass of steel and hauberk rings,
 And down falls helm, and down the
 shield,
 Rough with the dints of many a field.
 Fair was his manly form, and fair
 His keen dark eye, and close curl'd
 hair,
 When, all unarm'd, save that the
 brand
 Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
 With nought to fence his dauntless
 breast
 But the close gipon's * under-vest,
 Whose sullied buff the sable stains
 Of hauberk and of mail retains,—
 Roland De Vaux upon the brim
 Of the broad moat stood prompt to
 swim.

* A sort of doublet, worn beneath the ar-
 mour.

XIX.

Accounted thus he dared the tide,
 And soon he reach'd the farther side,
 And enter'd soon the Hold,
 And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
 Were blazon'd all with feats of pride,
 By warriors done of old.
 In middle lists they counter'd here,
 While trumpets seem'd to blow;
 And there, in den or desert drear,
 They quell'd gigantic foe,
 Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,
 Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.
 Strange in their arms, and strange
 in face,
 Heroes they seem'd of ancient race,
 Whose deeds of arms, and race, and
 name,
 Forgotten long by later fame,
 Were here depicted, to appal
 Those of an age degenerate,
 Whose bold intrusion braved their
 fate,
 In this enchanted hall.
 For some short space the venturous
 knight
 With these high marvels fed his
 sight,
 Then sought the chamber's upper
 end,
 Where three broad easy steps ascend
 To an arch'd portal door,
 In whose broad folding leaves of
 state
 Was framed a wicket window-grate,
 And, ere he ventured more,
 The gallant Knight took earnest view
 The grated wicket-window through.

XX.

O, for his arms! Of martial weed
 Had never mortal Knight such need!
 He spied a stately gallery; all
 Of snow-white marble was the wall,
 The vaulting, and the floor;
 And, contrast strange, on either
 hand
 There stood array'd in sable band
 Four Maids whom Afric bore;
 And each a Libyan tiger led,
 Held by as bright and frail a thread

As Lucy's golden hair,—
 For the leash that bound these mon-
 sters dread
 Was but of gossamer.
 Each Maiden's short barbaric vest
 Left all unclosed the knee and breast
 And limbs of shapely jet;
 White was their vest and turban's
 fold,
 On arms and ankles rings of gold
 In savage pomp were set;
 A quiver on their shoulders lay,
 And in their hand an assagay.
 Such and so silent stood they there,
 That Roland wellnigh hoped
 He saw a band of statues rare,
 Station'd the gazer's soul to scare;
 But when the wicket oped,
 Each grisly beast 'gan upward draw,
 Roll'd his grim eye, and spread his
 claw,
 Scented the air, and licked his jaw;
 While those weird maids, in Moorish
 tongue,
 A wild and dismal warning sung.

XXI.

“Rash Adventurer, bear thee back!
 Dread the spell of Dahomay!
 Fear the race of Zaharak,*
 Daughters of the burning day!”
 “When the whirlwind's gusts are
 wheeling,
 Ours it is the dance to braid;
 Zarah's sands in pillars reeling,
 Join the measure that we tread,
 When the Moon has donn'd her
 cloak,
 And the stars are red to see,
 Shrill when pipes the sad Siroc,
 Music meet for such as we.
 “Where the shatter'd columns lie,
 Showing Carthage once had been,
 If the wandering Santon's eye
 Our mysterious rites hath seen,—
 Oft he cons the prayer of death,
 To the nations preaches doom,
 ‘Azrael's brand hath left the sheath!
 Moslems, think upon the tomb!”

* The Arab name of the Great Desert.

"Ours the scorpion, ours the snake,
Ours the hydra of the fen,
Ours the tiger of the brake,
All that plague the sons of men.
Ours the tempest's midnight wrack,
Pestilence that wastes by day—
Dread the race of Zaharak!
Fear the spell of Dahomay!"

XXII.

Uncouth and strange the accents
shrill

Rung those vaulted roofs among,
Long it was ere, faint and still,
Died the far resounding song.
While yet the distant echoes roll,
The Warrior communed with his
soul.

"When first I took this venturous
quest,

I swore upon the rood,
Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,
For evil or for good.

My forward path too well I ween,
Lies yonder fearful ranks between!
For man unarm'd, 'tis bootless hope
With tigers and with fiends to cope—
Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
Save famine dire and fell despair?—
Other conclusion let me try,

Since, choose howe'er I list, I die.
Forward, lies faith and knightly
fame;

Behind, are perjury and shame.
In life or death I hold my word!"
With that he drew his trusty sword,
Caught down a banner from the
wall,

And enter'd thus the fearful hall.

XXIII.

On high each wayward Maiden threw
Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!
On either side a tiger sprung—
Against the leftward foe he flung
The ready banner, to engage
With tangling folds the brutal rage;
The right-hand monster in mid air
He struck so fiercely and so fair,
Through gullet and through spinal
bone,
The trenchant blade had sheerly
gone

His grisly brethren ramp'd and yell'd,
But the slight leash their rage with-
held,

Whilst, 'twixt their ranks, the danger-
ous road

Firmly, though swift, the champion
strode.

Safe to the gallery's bound he drew,
Safe pass'd an open portal through;
And when against pursuit he flung
The gate, judge if the echoes rung!
Onward his daring course he bore,
While, mix'd with dying growl and
roar,

Wild jubilee and loud hurra
Pursued him on his venturous way.

XXIV.

"Hurra, hurra! Our watch is done!
We hail once more the tropic sun.
Pallid beams of northern day,
Farewell, farewell! Hurra, hurra!"

"Five hundred years o'er this cold
glen
Hath the pale sun come round agen;
Foot of man, till now, hath ne'er
Dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

"Warrior! thou, whose dauntless
heart
Gives us from our ward to part,
Be as strong in future trial,
Where resistance is denial.

"Now for Afric's glowing sky,
Zwenga wide and Atlas high,
Zaharak and Dahomay!—
Mount the winds! Hurra, hurra!"

XXV.

The wizard song at distance died,
As if in ether borne astray,
While through waste halls and cham-
bers wide
The Knight pursued his steady
way,
Till to a lofty dome he came,
That flash'd with such a brilliant
flame,
As if the wealth of all the world
Were there in rich confusion hurl'd.
For here the gold, in sandy heaps,

With duller earth, incorporate, sleeps;
Was there in ingots piled, and there
Coin'd badge of empery it bare;
Yonder, huge bars of silver lay,
Dimm'd by the diamond's neighbour-
ing ray,

Like the pale moon in morning day;
And in the midst four Maidens stand,
The daughters of some distant land.
Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
That fringes oft a thunder sky;
Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
And cotton fillets bound their hair;
Slim was their form, their mien was
shy,

To earth they bent the humbled eye,
Folded their arms, and suppliant
kneel'd,
And thus their proffer'd gifts re-
veal'd.

XXVI.

CHORUS.

"See the treasures Merlin piled,
Portion meet for Arthur's child.
Bathe in Wealth's unbounded stream,
Wealth that Avarice ne'er could
dream!"

FIRST MAIDEN.

"See these clots of virgin gold!
Sever'd from the spary mould,
Nature's mystic alchemy
In the mine thus bade them lie;
And their Orient smile can win
Kings to stoop, and saints to sin."—

SECOND MAIDEN.

"See these pearls, that long have
slept;
These were tears by Naiads wept
For the loss of Marinel.
Tritons in the silver shell
Treasured them, till hard and white
As the teeth of Amphitrite."—

THIRD MAIDEN.

"Does a livelier hue delight?
Here are rubies blazing bright,
Here the emerald's fairy green,
And the topaz glows between;
Here their varied hues unite,
In the changeful chrysolite."—

FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Leave these gems of poorer shine,
Leave them all and look on mine!
While their glories I expand,
Shade thine eyebrows with thy hand.
Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
Blind the rash beholder's gaze."—

CHORUS.

"Warrior, seize the splendid store;
Would 'twere all our mountains bore!
We should ne'er in future story,
Read, Peru, thy perish'd glory!"

XXVII.

Calmly and unconcern'd, the Knight
Waved aside the treasures bright:—
"Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray!
Bar not thus my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys!
Did your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thirsty land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steel,
And all the ore he deign'd to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilts his sword."
Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII.

And now the morning sun was high,
De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry;
When, lo! a plashing sound he hears,
A gladsome signal that he nears
Some frolic water-run;

And soon he reach'd a court-yard
square,

Where, dancing in the sultry air,
Toss'd high aloft, a fountain fair
Was sparkling in the sun.

On right and left, a fair arcade,
In long perspective view display'd
Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade:

But, full in front, a door,
Low-brow'd and dark, seem'd as it
led

To the lone dwelling of the dead,
Whose memory was no more.

XXIX.

Here stopp'd De Vaux an instant's
space,
To bathe his parched lips and face,

And mark'd with well-pleas'd
 eye,
 Refracted on the fountain stream,
 In rainbow hues the dazzling beam
 Of that gay summer sky.
 His senses felt a mild control,
 Like that which lulls the weary soul,
 From contemplation high
 Relaxing, when the ear receives
 The music that the greenwood leaves
 Make to the breezes' sigh.

XXX.

And oft in such a dreamy mood,
 The half-shut eye can frame
 Fair apparitions in the wood
 As if the nymphs of field and flood
 In gay procession came.
 Are these of such fantastic mould,
 Seen distant down the fair ar-
 cade,
 These Maids enlink'd in sister-fold,
 Who, late at bashful distance
 staid,
 Now tripping from the green-
 wood shade,
 Nearer the musing champion draw,
 And, in a pause of seeming awe,
 Again stand doubtful now?—
 Ah, that sly pause of witching powers!
 That seems to say, "To please be
 ours,
 Be yours to tell us how."
 Their hue was of the golden glow
 That suns of Candahar bestow,
 O'er which in slight effusion flows
 A frequent tinge of paly rose;
 Their limbs were fashion'd fair and
 free,
 In nature's justest symmetry;
 And, wreathed with flowers, with
 odours graced,
 Their raven ringlets reach'd the
 waist:
 In eastern pomp, its gilding pale
 The hennah lent each shapely nail,
 And the dark sumah gave the eye
 More liquid and more lustrous dye.
 The spotless veil of misty lawn,
 In studied disarrangement, drawn
 The form and bosom o'er,
 To win the eye, or tempt the touch,

For modesty show'd all too much—
 Too much—yet promised more.

XXXI.

"Gentle Knight, a while delay,"
 Thus they sung, "thy toilsome way,
 While we pay the duty due
 To our Master and to you.
 Over Avarice, over Fear,
 Love triumphant led thee here;
 Warrior, list to us, for we
 Are slaves to Love, are friends to
 thee.
 Though no treasured gems have we,
 To proffer on the bended knee,
 Though we boast nor arm nor heart,
 For the assagay or dart,
 Swains allow each simple girl
 Ruby lip and teeth of pearl;
 Or, if dangers more you prize,
 Flatterers find them in our eyes.

"Stay, then, gentle Warrior, stay,
 Rest till evening steal on day;
 Stay, O, stay!—in yonder bowers
 We will braid thy locks with flowers,
 Spread the feast and fill the wine,
 Charm thy ear with sounds divine,
 Weave our dances till delight
 Yield to languor, day to night.

"Then shall she you most approve,
 Sing the lays that best you love,
 Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
 Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,
 Till the weary night be o'er—
 Gentle Warrior, wouldst thou more?
 Wouldst thou more, fair Warrior,—
 she
 Is slave to Love, and slave to thee."

XXXII.

O, do not hold it for a crime
 In the bold hero of my rhyme,
 For Stoic look,
 And meet rebuke,
 He lack'd the heart or time;
 As round the band of sirens trip,
 He kiss'd one damsel's laughing lip,
 And press'd another's proffer'd hand.
 Spoke to them all in accents bland,
 But broke their magic circle through;

"Kind Maids," he said, "adieu,
adieu!
My fate, my fortune, forward lies."
He said, and vanish'd from their
eyes;

But, as he dared that darksome way,
Still heard behind their lovely lay:—
"Fair Flower of Courtesy, depart!
Go, where the feelings of the heart
With the warm pulse in concord
move;
Go, where Virtue sanctions Love!"

XXXIII.

Downward De Vaux through dark-
some ways
And ruin'd vaults has gone,
Till issue from their wilder'd maze,
Or safe retreat, seem'd none,—
And e'en the dismal path he strays
Grew worse as he went on.

For cheerful sun, for living air,
Foul vapours rise and mine-fires
glare,
Whose fearful light the dangers
show'd
That dogg'd him on that dreadful
road.

Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
They show'd, but show'd not how to
shun.

These scenes of desolate despair,
These smothering clouds of poison'd
air;

How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
Though 'twere to face yon tigers
ranged!

Nay, soothful bards have said
So perilous his state seem'd now,
He wish'd him under arbour bough
With Asia's willing maid,
When, joyful sound! at distance near
A trumpet flourish'd loud and clear,
And as it ceased, a lofty lay
Seem'd thus to chide his lagging way.

XXXIV.

"Son of Honour, theme of story,
Think on the reward before ye!
Danger, darkness, toil despise;
'Tis Ambition bids thee rise.

"He that would her heights ascend,
Many a weary step must wend;
Hand and foot and knee he tries;
Thus Ambition's minions rise.

"Lag not now, though rough the
way,
Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
Grasp the boon that's spread before
ye,
Monarch's power, and Conqueror's
glory!"

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
A steep ascent the wanderer found,
And then a turret stair:
Nor climb'd he far its steepy round
Till fresher blew the air,
And next a welcome glimpse was
given,
That cheer'd him with the light of
heaven.

At length his toil had won
A lofty hall with trophies dress'd,
Where, as to greet imperial guest,
Four Maidens stood, whose crimson
vest
Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV.

Of Europe seem'd the damsels all;
The first a nymph of lively Gaul,
Whose easy step and laughing eye
Her borrow'd air of awe belie;

The next a maid of Spain,
Dark-eyed, dark-hair'd, sedate, yet
bold;

White ivory skin and tress of gold,
Her shy and bashful comrade told
For daughter of Almaine.

These maidens bore a royal robe,
With crown, with sceptre, and with
globe,

Emblems of empery;
The fourth a space behind them
stood,

And leant upon a harp, in mood
Of minstrel ecstasy.

Of merry England she, in dress
Like ancient British Druidess.
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vestures swept the ground,
And, in her hand display'd,

A crown did that fourth Maiden hold,
But unadorn'd with gems and gold,
Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI.

At once to brave De Vaux knelt
down
These foremost Maidens three,
And proffer'd sceptre, robe, and
crown,

Liegedom and seignorie,
O'er many a region wide and fair,
Destined, they said, for Arthur's
heir;

But homage would he none:—
"Rather," he said, "De Vaux would
ride,

A Warden of the Border-side,
In plate and mail, than, robed in
pride,

A monarch's empire own;
Rather, far rather, would he be
A free-born knight of England free,
Than sit on Despot's throne."

So pass'd he on, when that fourth
Maid,

As starting from a trance,
Upon the harp her fingers laid;
Her magic touch the chords obey'd,
Their soul awak'd at once!

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately Towers, and Banner'd Keep,
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

"Fiends, that wait on Merlin's
spell,

Hear the foot-fall! mark it well!
Spread your dusky wings abroad,
Bonne ye for your homeward road!

"It is His, the first who e'er
Dared the dismal Hall of Fear;
His, who hath the snares defied
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and
Pride.

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Bastion huge, and Turret steep!
Tremble, Keep! and totter, Tower!
This is Gyneth's waking hour."

XXXVII.

Thus while she sung, the venturous
Knight
Has reach'd a bower, where milder
light

Through crimson curtains fell;
Such soften'd shade the hill receives,
Her purple veil when twilight leaves
Upon its western swell.

That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
Hath wondrous store of rare and rich
As e'er was seen with eye;

For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limn'd in proper dye.

All seem'd to sleep—the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair

Between the earth and sky.
But what of pictured rich and rare
Could win De Vaux's eye-glance,
where,

Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,
He saw King Arthur's child!

Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
From her brow had pass'd away,
Forgot was that fell tourney-day,

For, as she slept, she smiled:
It seem'd, that the repentant Seer
Her sleep of many a hundred year
With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII.

That form of maiden loveliness,
"Twixt childhood and 'twixt
youth,

That ivory chair, that silvan dress,
The arms and ankles bare, express
Of Lyulph's tale the truth.

Still upon her garment's hem
Vanoc's blood made purple gem,
And the warden of command

Cumber'd still her sleeping hand;
Still her dark locks dishevel'd flow
From net of pearl o'er breast of snow;

And so fair the slumberer seems,
That De Vaux impeach'd his dreams,
Vapid all and void of might,

Hiding half her charms from sight.
Motionless a while he stands,
Folds his arms and clasps his hands,
Trembling in his fitful joy,

Doubtful how he should destroy
 Long-enduring spell;
 Doubtful, too, when slowly rise
 Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
 What these eyes shall tell.—
 "St. George! St. Mary! can it be,
 That they will kindly look on me!"

XXXIX.

Gently, lo! the Warrior kneels,
 Soft that lovely hand he steals,
 Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
 But the warder leaves her grasp;
 Lightning flashes, rolls the thun-
 der,

Gyneth startles from her sleep,
 Totters Tower, and trembles Keep,
 Burst the Castle-walls asunder!

Fierce and frequent were the shocks,—
 Melt the magic halls away;

—But beneath their mystic rocks,
 In the arms of bold De Vaux,

Safe the Princess lay;
 Safe and free from magic power,
 Blushing like the rose's flower

Opening to the day;
 And round the Champion's brows
 were bound

The crown that Druidess had wound,
 Of the green laurel-bay.

And this was what remain'd of all
 The wealth of each enchanted hall,

The Garland and the Dame:
 But where should Warrior seek the
 meed,

Due to high worth for daring deed,
 Except from LOVE and FAME?

CONCLUSION.

I.

MY Lucy, when the Maid is won,
 The Minstrel's task, thou know'st, is
 done;

And to require of bard
 That to his dregs the tale should run,
 Were ordinance too hard.

Our lovers, briefly be it said,
 Wedded as lovers wont to wed,
 When tale or play is o'er,

Lived long and blest, loved fond and
 true,

And saw a numerous race renew
 The honours that they bore.
 Know, too, that when a pilgrim
 strays,
 In morning mist or evening maze,
 Along the mountain lone,
 That fairy fortress often mocks
 His gaze upon the castled rocks
 Of the Valley of St. John;
 But never man since brave De Vaux
 The charmed portal won.
 'Tis now a vain illusive show,
 That melts whene'er the sunbeams
 glow
 Or the fresh breeze hath blown.

II.

But see, my love, where far below
 Our lingering wheels are moving
 slow,

The whiles, up-gazing still,
 Our menials eye our steepy way,
 Marvelling, perchance, what wind
 can stay

Our steps, when eve is sinking grey,
 On this gigantic hill.

So think the vulgar—Life and time
 Ring all their joys in one dull chime
 Of luxury and ease;

And, O! beside these simple knaves,
 How many better born are slaves

To such coarse joys as these,—
 Dead to the nobler sense that glows
 When Nature's grander scenes un-
 close!

But, Lucy, we will love them yet,
 The mountain's misty coronet,
 The greenwood, and the wold;
 And love the more, that of their maze
 Adventure high of other days

By ancient bards is told,
 Bringing, perchance, like my poor
 tale,

Some moral truth in fiction's veil:
 Nor love them less, that o'er the hill
 The evening breeze, as now, comes
 chill;—

My love shall wrap her warm,
 And, fearless of the slippery way,
 While safe she trips the heathy breae,
 Shall hang on Arthur's arm.







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